

Slave to the Needles

interviews
WITH
rock'n'roll knitters

Magnetic
Fields

CADALLACA

FUGAZI • Ida

Tracy and the
Plastics

Polyphonic Spree

THE BUTCHIES

Jawbox

Mirah

Damon
& Naomi

TWO
TON BOA

Sufjan
Stevens

TORTOISE
and more

issue
#3



patterns
comics
how-to

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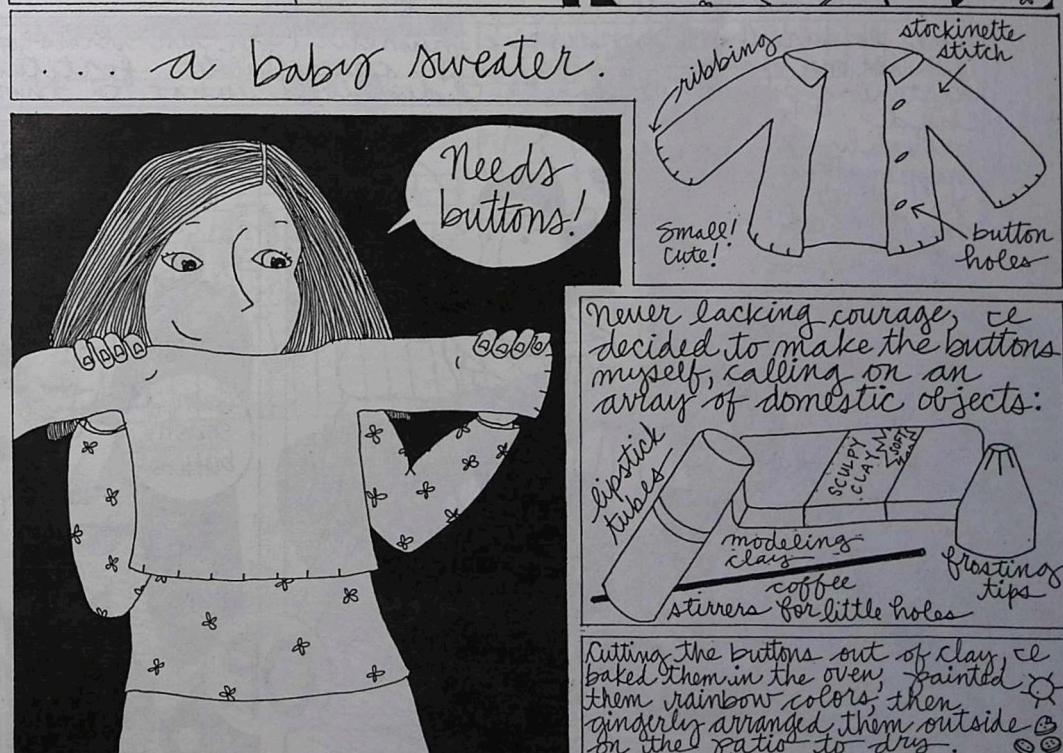
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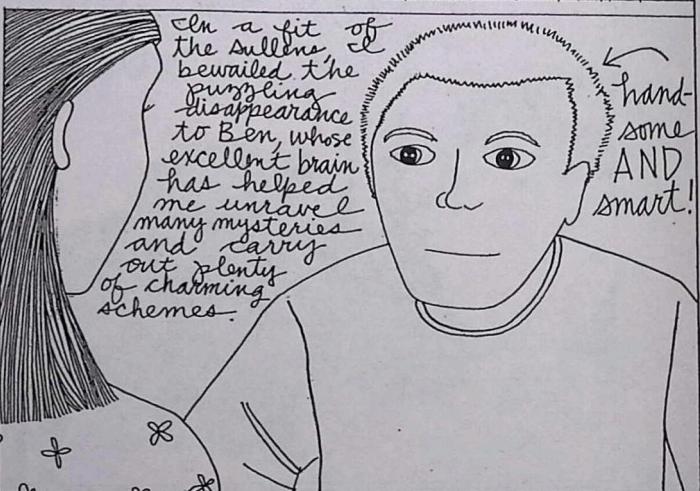
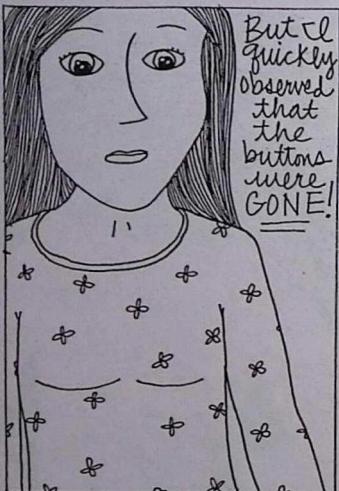
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Who's Got the Button?



A few hours &
three episodes
of Buffy
later, I went
outside to
gather the
buttons.

I can't wait
to see how
they turned
out!



Ben endured my mauvaise humeur (for an occasional m.h. is one of my foibles) with characteristic fortitude, listening patiently while I described what I thought had probably happened to my buttons.



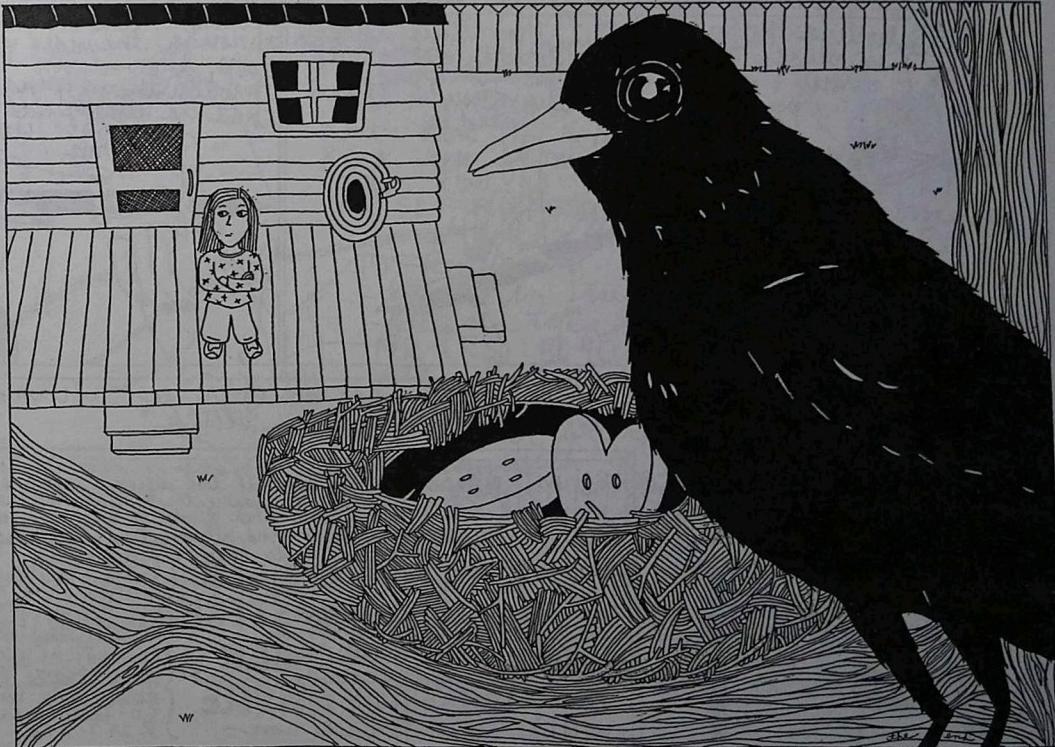
I was vexed
with myself
for leaving
the cute
homemade
buttons out-
side all
day for
someone to
steal,
mischievous-
ly use
as
dinner
plates, or
destroy
with
Republican
malice.



Well,
BIRDS
like colorful
sects...



Then
Ben
thought
of something.



Casting on

RECAST

It stopped you in your tracks: after spending the standard two weeks knitting your first scarf, you started your second project, only to discover that you'd forgotten how to cast on. Revising from the first issue of this zine, here's a review.

by Aimee Johnson

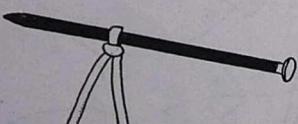
Making the first row of stitches is called casting on. To cast on, you use one needle and your hands. The first stitch is different from all the rest: it's a slip knot, girl scout! make it by creating a pretzel-shaped loop.

Leave a long tail!

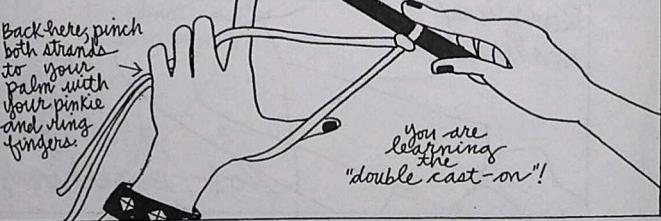
Put the first stitch onto the needle like this:



Then, gently pull both strands of yarn to tighten the stitch.



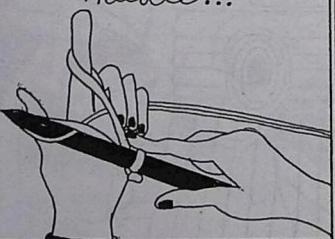
To cast on the rest of the first row, hold the needle in your right hand, keeping the first stitch in place with your index finger. With your left hand, stretch the yarn into a sort of diamond shape.



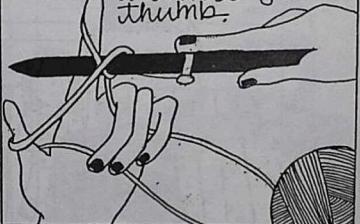
Still holding the stitch in place, turn your palm upward.



Put the needle through the thumb loop. With this loop wrapped loosely around the needle...



...insert the needle through the index finger loop, then down through the gaping loop that is wrapped around your thumb.



Now you can let the whole mess slide off your left hand. Pull both strands of yarn to tighten the stitch.



Repeat these steps to cast on as many stitches as your pattern tells you, or just practice casting on 'til you feel comfortable with it.

Are there other ways of casting on? YES! They all look different, and some are more elastic than others. Here are some other kinds of cast-ons, and where to find illuminating directions for how to do them:

THE SINGLE cast-on { Falick, Melanie. *Kidz Knitting*. New York: Artisan, 1998. P.26-27.
THE EASTERN cast-on Lewandowski, Marcin. *Folk Mittens*. Loveland CO: Interweave, 1997. P.16.

THE CABLE cast-on and **THE INVISIBLE cast-on** Epstein, Nicky. *Nicky Epstein's Knitted Embellishments*. Loveland CO: Interweave, 1999. P. 25-26 CO.

BARN BONNET

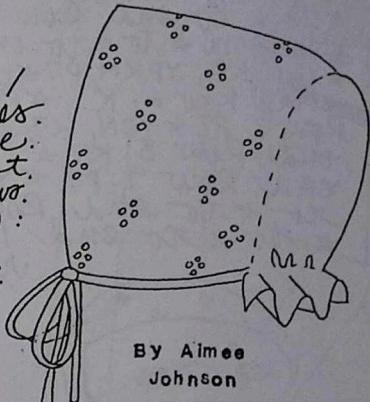
Materials: One skein Paton's Classic merino 100% pure new wool (3½ oz./100g/204 m); size 7 knitting needles. Directions are given for adult size. Cast on 127 sts. Work in moss st. (K1, *P1, K1*, rep from * to *) for 4 rows. Begin tulip lace pattern: Row 1 (RS):

Knit. Row 2 and every WS row: Purl. Row 3: K3 YF, SL1, K1, PSSO, K6 *, rep from * to * to last 4 sts, YF SL1, K1, PSSO, K2. Row 5:

K1, K2 tog, YF, K1, YF, SL1, K1, PSSO, K3 *, rep from * to * to last 6 sts, K2 tog, YF, K1, YF, SL1, K1, PSSO, K1. Row 7: Rep row 3. Row 9: Knit. Row 11: K7, YF, SL1, K1, PSSO, K6 *, rep from * to * to end of row. Row 13: K5, * K2 tog, YF, K1, YF, SL1, K1, PSSO, K3 *, rep from * to * to last 2 sts, K2. Row 15: Rep row 11. Row 16: Purl. Work in tulip lace pattern for a total of 32 rows.

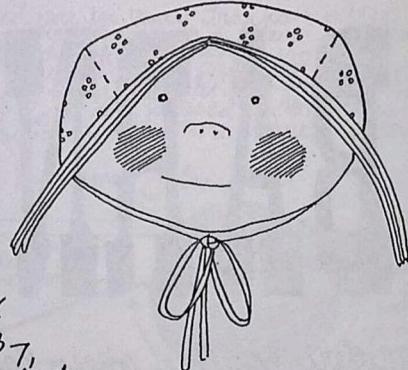
NR (RS): BO 40 sts, K47 sts, BO 40 sts. Beginning with a pure row, work the remaining 47 sts in st st for 50 rows, ending with a pure (WS) row. Dec 1 st each end of next 8 RS rows. 31 sts remain. Establish nape ruffle on next (WS) row: K7, *P1, K7*, rep from * to * to end of row. Make nape ruffle: Row 1: P7, *YON, K1, YFRN, P7*, rep from * to * to end of row. Row 2: K7, *P3, K7*, rep from * to * to end of row.

By Aimese
Johnson



BARN BONNET

continued



Row 3: P7, *YON, K3, YFRN, P2*, rep from * to * to end. Row 4: K7, *P5, K7*, rep from * to * to end. Row 5: P7, *YON, K5, YFRN, P7*, rep from * to * to end. Row 6: K7, *P7, K7*, rep from * to * to end. Row 7: P7, *YON, K7, YFRN, P7, rep from * to * to end. Row 8: K7, *P9, K7*, rep from * to * to end. Row 9: P7, *YON, K9, YFRN, P7*, rep from * to * to end. Row 10: K7, *P11, K7*, rep from * to * to end. Row 11: P7, *YON, K11, YFRN, P7*, rep from * to * to end. Row 12: K7, *P13, K7*, rep from * to * to end. Bind off.

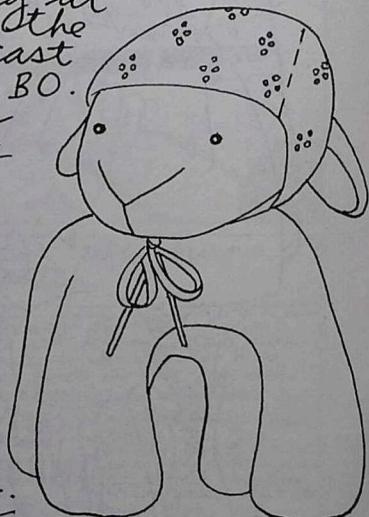
Turn bonnet inside-out and sew side seams.

To make the ties, pick up every stitch along bonnet's lower edge on one side, beginning at the nape of the neck, then cast on 75 sts. BO.

Repeat on the other side to make a second tie. Sew corner to nape of neck on each

side to close the little gap.

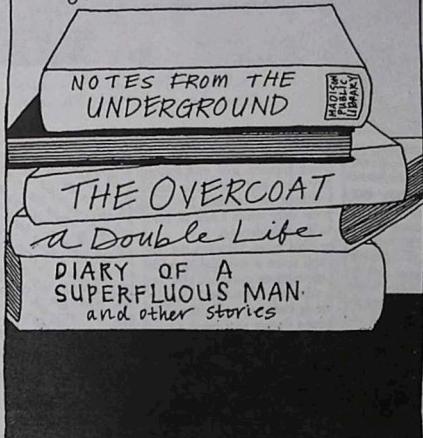
Weave in ends.



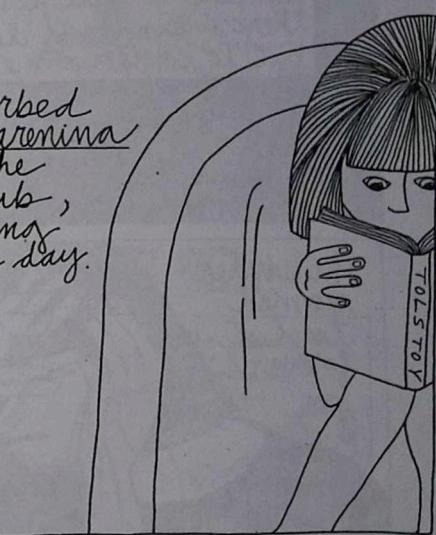
ХРОНИЧЕСКИЙ

BY
Aimee
Johnson

The canonical Russians sustained me in my first Wisconsin winter: Chekhov, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Pavlova.



I absorbed Anna Karenina in the bathtub, soaking twice a day.



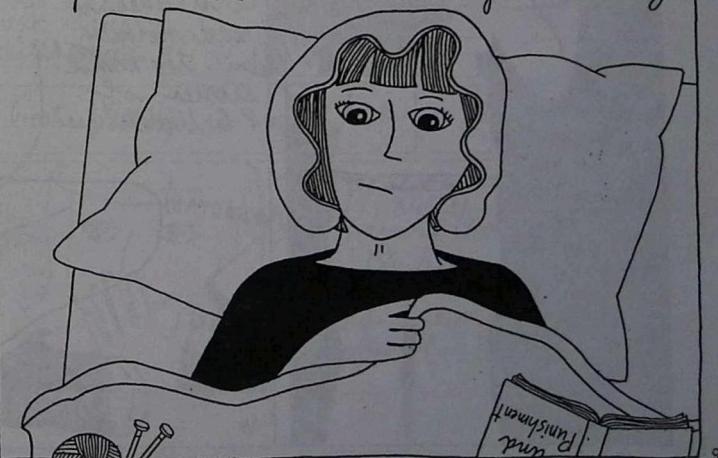
TOLSTOY

gave me greater comfort



than any of the others.

But I was melancholic during the cold months and given constantly to illness. Beginning to feel like the heroine of a 19th-century novel, weakly constituted and unable to go about in wet weather, I nurtured a tortured hopelessness about my recovery.



I couldn't get better despite the baths, and the doctors, and the Russians, and this monsuccess cost me considerable loss of temper. I felt certain that there was nothing left for me but to consider my eternal salvation.



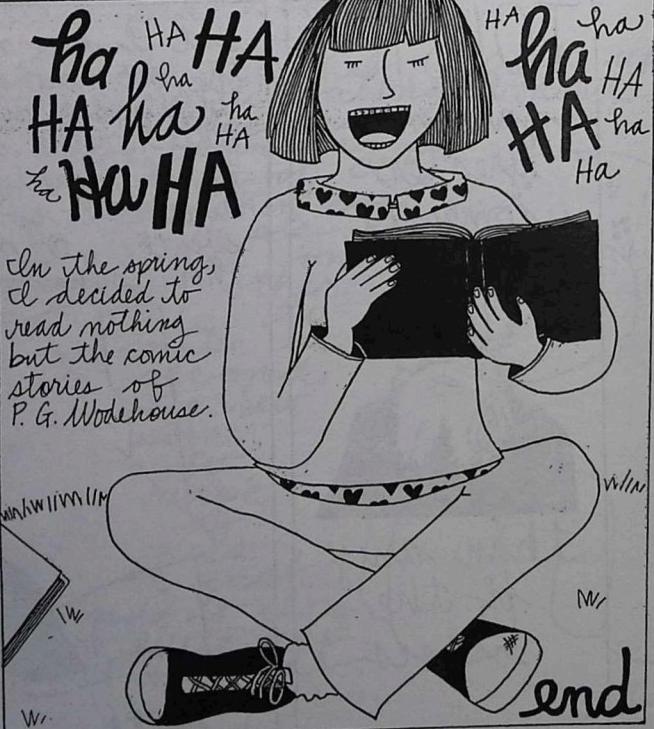
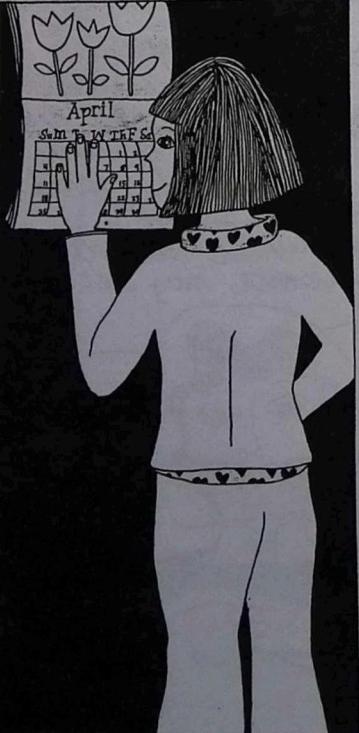
The winter seemed to last forever.

induce my own
And so I continue
For a whole wee
did not show any
tion in Liza grew

... The misfor
esteem — consists
have eyes and eve
everything in a f
own thoughts an
beginning of our
easily, like a chil
something still

in this transformation. By Go
with rapture. For that mattered
my place any other man might
without self-esteem? I need
to me only when I had to fold
alk enough already.
g that arose between me and
and there is nothing surprising
of misunderstandings that last
who was it who said that the
us as visible as truth, if not me
even during that week a wor
... But a man like me, a solit
just as incapable of understand
of that which is being accom
is, love a natural feeling? It
is a sickness; and no law ha
anted that at times my heart
everything within me was tu

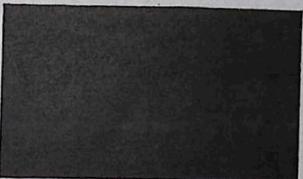
, either
any case
it was in
were resolved
One day, it was in
in the hall. Then the door bell wa
cered Mr. Odovcik.
peared, swiftly flung round his sh
Kuzia Mayevich, carelessly to
which had been lying on a be
ing, and disappeared with a
"Who is this?" he aske
sent from Petersbur
the servants vanis
him his son.
"We enter
"The ha
with



Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters

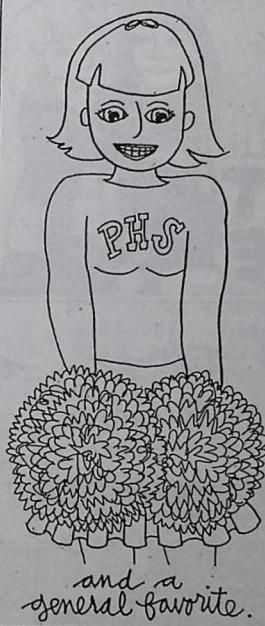
By Aimee Johnson

In my final year of high school, I got sick & spent three weeks in the hospital.



But that's not what this story is about.

Phoebe was a cheerleader

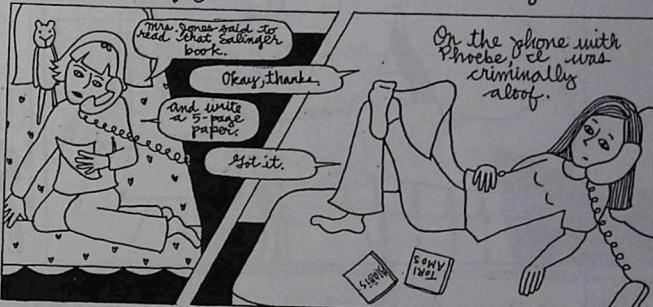


and a general favorite.



In either a blaze of insight or a fog of oblivion, the English teacher sent my assignments home with one of the most popular girls in the school.

When she called, I was in my room listening to shitty, overwrought alt-rock, as was my procedure in those days.



On the phone with Phoebe, I was criminally aloof.

But Phoebe was supposed to bring me some books from Mrs. Jones, so she came over the next day after school.



We paid our devours.

Hey.

Hey!

How Phoebe & I became best friends is kind of a stumper.



All of a sudden I found myself calling up boys from Phoebe's family's rec room, listening to Neil Young records, and shopping for Prom dresses.

At first we just hung out reading zines and watching MTV before Phoebe's gymnastics class.

Where did you get these? We should make one!



I was a particularly pretentious teenager and took myself very seriously, two faults I had no intention of mending. Although I lacked that disposition that makes a girl popular, I was both reflective & passionate, and Phoebe, who I discovered had even fewer friends than I did despite her irrefutable claim to high school royalty, took to me like an adhesive.



It turned out that Phoebe, like many beautiful, popular girls, was incredibly insecure.

Lonely, too.



The thing is, Phoebe was totally fucking smart.



She was also funny as hell.

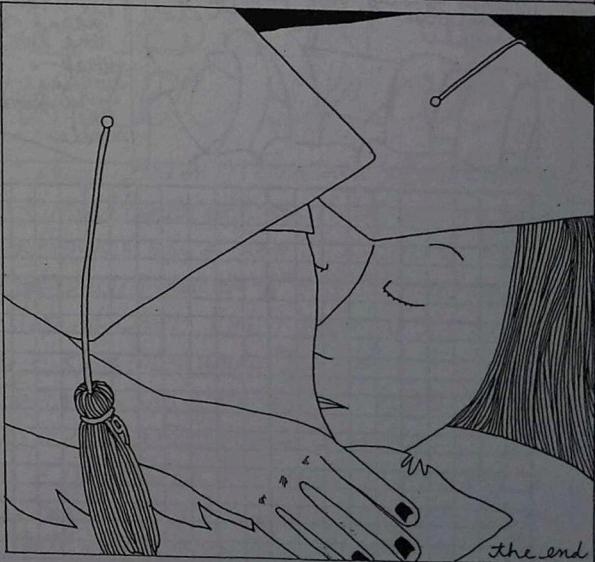
She and I had become terribly fond of one another, & when I returned to school in the spring Phoebe & I were closer than ever. There were rock shows, late nights at the diner, & conversations about personal vulnerability & loss.

How impossible to account for friendship and the circumstances that produce it.

But an all-conquering fear of graduation day attended our every adventure. Phoebe and I were going away to different universities.



After graduation, we fell out of touch as quickly as we had become BFFs. That was thirteen years ago!

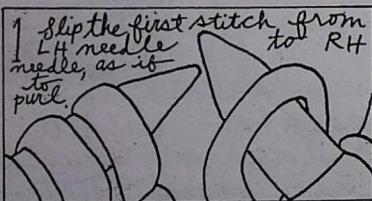


help! i don't know a **ssk** from my **ass**

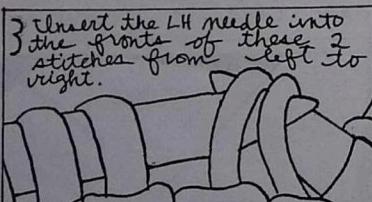
by dimee johnson

What does SSK stand for?
It's short for "slip, slip, knit."
What does a SSK do?
A SSK is a means of decreasing
one stitch. It slants to the left.
& is the mirror image of the
K2TOG, which slants to the right.

HOW TO DO A SLIP, SLIP, KNIT:

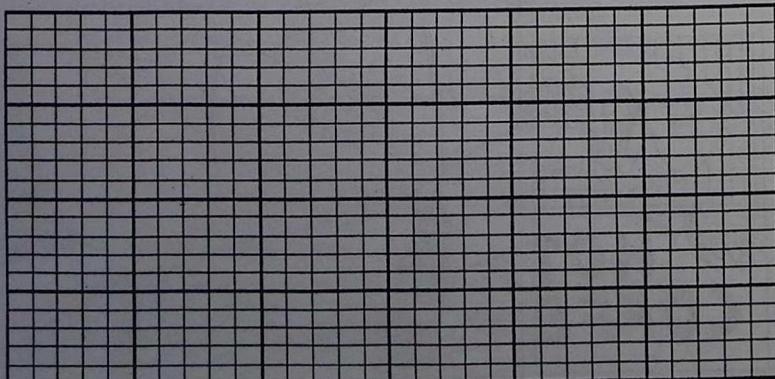


2 Slip the second stitch in the same way. You are inserting the RH needle into the stitch from right to left, then pulling it off. You're not actually knitting the stitch, just moving it.



4 Wrap the working yarn in the usual way (wrapping it around RH needle) & knit the two slipped stitches together.

wrap working yarn around RH needle → the end



Knitting Needle Equivalencies

	U.S.	0	1	2	3	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10 1/2	11	11	13	15
Canadian																		
6 old U.K.	14	13	12	11	10	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	00	000
Metric	2	2 1/4	2 1/2	3	3 1/4	3 1/2	4	4 1/2	5	5 1/2	6	6 1/2	7	7 1/2	8	9	10	

Algebra for Knitters

in	=	cm x .3937
cm	=	in x 2.54
yd	=	m x .9144
m	=	yd x 1.0936
oz	=	g x .0352
g	=	oz x 28.35

Convertible Mittens

Materials: 2 skeins Nashua Handknits Creative Focus Chunky, #9 dpns & a stitch marker. Right mitten: Co 24 sts or 2 dpns held tog. Divide evenly on 4 dpns & join marking beg of round w/ a st. marker. Work in st st until st st portion measures 2.25". NR: *K3, M1, K4. Rep from * to *. Cont. in st st until st st portion measures 4", then mark the thumb: K across sts on needle #1. On needle #2, k the next 5 sts. * a piece of waste yarn in a different color & slip the 5 sts back onto L needle. K them again, this time with the working yarn. K across the sts on needles 3 & 4. Work 7 rounds in st st to create the slit across needle #1. K the first 2 sts on needle #2. Work work the 14 ribbed sts in 1/1 rib & work all other sts in st st. Although the border of ribbing can be heavy, it's crucial here... it keeps your mitten flat! Without it, the st st will curl & you'll be smearing like a stroopwafel. NR: BO the 14 ribbed sts in patt & K the other sts. When you get back to the point where you bound off, Co 1 st with the working yarn. Rep from 3 rows, work the 14 new sts in 1/1 rib & work all other sts in st st. After these 3 rows, cont in st st until st st portion measures 7.5". Next, de-moilese the dc for mitten: Needles: K1, SSK, K to end. Needle #2: K to last 3 sts, K2 tog, K1. Needle #3: K1, 2 rows every top of SSK, K plain round.

round Needle #4: K to last 3 sts, K2 tog, K1. After this dec round, K Rep dec round. K2 round plain. Rep dec round. Then rep dec round until 6 sts rem. Combine the sts from needles 1 & 2 on one needle. Combine the sts from needles 3 & 4 on another needle. Use Kitchener st to graft these 6 sts tog. Thumb: Pull out the waste yarn you used to mark the thumb. There are 4 "hot" stitches (4 on top & 5 on bottom). Slip the 9 sts onto 3 dpns. Rejoin the working yarn & work in st st, picking up 1 st on each side in the first rnd to avoid a little gap on each side. Now you have 11 sts. Cont. in st st until the thumb measures 2.5" from its base, then K2 tog until 5 sts rem. Cut yarn & use a tapestry needle to draw yarn through rem 5 sts. Weave in the ends. But the thing with mittens is you have to make 2. Oh my god, right? Rep the entire pattern to make the left mitten, except make thumb as follows: K across needles 1 & 2. On needle #3 K1 st. K the next 5 sts with waste yarn. Slide these 5 sts back onto L needle & K them again with the working yarn. Continue as with right mitten.

By Aimee Hagerty Johnson

WITH LOVE FROM WISCONSIN

WARM Winter Hat

By Aimee Johnson. Materials: 2 skeins Green Mountain Spinnery "Mountain Mohair" (2 oz./140 yd.) #10 needles. Directions: Cast on 102 sts. Row 1: P2, *K1, sl1 purrlwise, K1, P2. *Rep from * to *. Row 2: K2, *P3, K2. *Rep from * to *. Rep these 2 rows until piece measures 6 3/4" (9 3/4" if you want a fold-up brim). Dec for top of hat: Row 1: P2, *K1, sl1, K1, P2. *Rep from * to *. Row 2: K2, *P2 tog, P1, K2. *Rep from * to *. Row 3: P2, K2 tog, P2. *Rep from * to *. Row 4: K2, *P1, K2. *Rep from * to *. Row 5: P2 tog, *K2 tog, P1. *Rep from * to *. Row 6: K1, *P1, K1. *Rep from * to *. Row 7: P1, *K2 tog. *Rep from * to *. Row 8: P to last st, K1. Row 9: P1, *K2 tog. *Rep from * to *. Cut yarn, leaving an 8" tail, & draw through rem 11 sts. Sew side seam. Wear while shoveling the driveway. *The End*

SLOW DOUGH

MAKING YOUR OWN BREAD IS TOTALLY, TOTALLY WORTH THE WAIT!

By Aimee Johnson

Ingredients

1 package active dry yeast
 $\frac{1}{3}$ C. warm water
 $3\frac{1}{2}$ C. flour (try a combination of unbleached white and whole wheat)

2 tsp sea salt
 and another
 $\frac{1}{4}$ C. warm water
 flour if dough
 bone. Or, to have
 the dough for you
 bread hook & mix
 for seven or eight

① Dissolve the dry yeast in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup warm (not HOT!) water.
 (dry yeast is packaged like CONDOMS!)

② Pour the flour & salt in a mixing bowl. Slowly add the yeast solution, & then the other $1\frac{1}{4}$ C. water, stirring with a Spatula. Set the dough ~~rest~~ ^{for} three minutes.

③ Next you're going to knead the bread dough. To knead by hand, put the dough on a lightly floured countertop & knead for ten minutes, adding more flour if dough is too sticky. Then return the dough to the mixer & attach the attachment on low speed for seven or eight



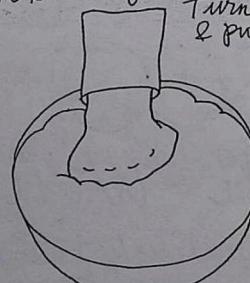
I let the dough rise upstairs in my warm bedroom!



⑤ When the dough has tripled in bulk, remove the plastic wrap and the dish towel.

⑥ Deflate the dough by punching it once sharply, then scrape the sides of the bowl with the Spatula. Use your hands to fold the sides of the dough into the center. Turn the dough upside-down & put it back in the bowl.

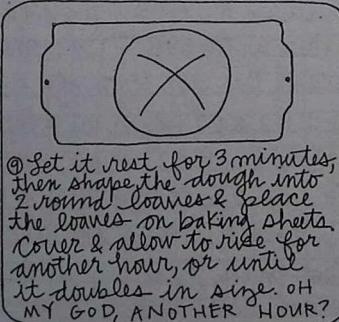
FWAP!



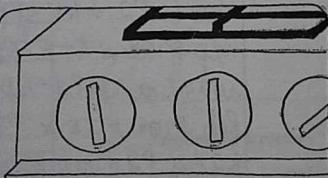
⑦ Cover the bowl as before, and allow to rise for another $1\frac{1}{2}$ - 2 hours, or until the dough has tripled in size again. PATIENCE, LITTLE ONE.



16



⑧ Let it rest for 3 minutes, then shape the dough into 2 round loaves & place the loaves on baking sheets. Cover & allow to rise for another hour, or until it doubles in size. OH MY GOD, ANOTHER HOUR?



⑨ Preheat the oven to 375°. Take the plastic wrap & dish towel off of the loaves & bake the loaves for 35 minutes, the end

Ian MacKaye of

Fugazi and the Evens

SttN: Are you ready to talk about sewing?

IM: Yeah.

SttN: So, are you good at it?

IM: Well, I have a specific stitch that I think I'm good at...

SttN: What is it?

IM: I don't know what it is. The stitch I do, I thread it back through the loop, so the tension—it doesn't pull on the material, it just pulls on the thread.

SttN: It sounds kind of like that stitch you see at the edge of blankets sometimes, do you know what I mean?

IM: Yeah. I don't know.

SttN: When did you start sewing?

IM: I learned how to sew as a Boy Scout because I had to put on my own patches.

SttN: [Laughing]

IM: And, you know, in the seventies, patches were a big thing—you know, people would sew patches on their jean jacket. STP patches and things. I would sew on a lot of patches. They actually called me "Patches," the kids at school. "Patches" and "Rags."

SttN: Have you ever used a sewing machine?

IM: I've never used one, and I've tried. I think someone might have sat me down and I did, like, a straight line... In any event, I don't have a sewing machine. I have a vacuum cleaner and a broom, and you can guess which one I use. I use the broom.

SttN: Sewing machines are a little complicated.

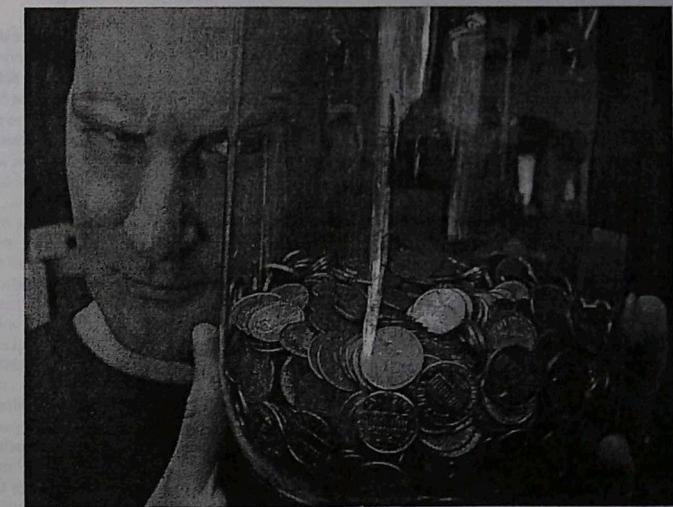
IM: It's not even how to use a sewing machine, it's that I can't understand how it works --how the needle going up and down sews something. Sewing by hand, it's kind of meditative. You sew, and then you've sewn.

SttN: Yeah, you actually have something afterward.

IM: It's not just spiritual meditation, it's a hat! Most people stare at a light-box eight hours a day, and afterward you haven't made or changed a goddamn thing.

SttN: Do you ever sew from scratch?

IM: I sew on demand. If I have a hole in my pants, I sew it up. I never thought of sewing as a craft. I thought of it as a necessity, because I had a hole in my ass and I had to fix it. I don't throw stuff away,



that's not my style. If something tears, I'll try to fix it. My inclination is to do small, tight stitches—uniform. Almost like a zipper. I think I'd be good at sewing up someone's skin, if I ever had to do that.

SttN: So you fix things...

IM: Yeah. Sewing I always thought of as repair. Knitting is like genesis—I mean, you just have this yarn—what do you use for knitting, just yarn? String?

SttN: You can use all kinds of crazy shit! Some people pull videotape out of

VHS tapes and knit with it.

IM: So it's just this material that you start with, and you create something! It's different.

SttN: What's the best homemade gift you've ever gotten?

IM: My mother gave me a box of relatives.

SttN: [pause]

IM: What it was—it was kind of a cigar box, and over the years she had clipped out of the newspaper any headline that mentioned anyone in the family. So it was like a box of relatives.

SttN: Is there a skill, art, or craft you want to learn?

IM: Sure! All of them. I'd like to learn how to knit. I'd like to learn how to do carpentry. I'd like to learn gardening. If I have any kind of regret, it's that there are so many things to do and I'll never be able to afford them the proper attention. I'll be 43 next week and I feel like I'm just scratching the surface of all the things I want to do.

SttN: Anything else you'd like to say about knitting?

IM: Tell people to keep on making things.

ANNIE HOLOIEN OF THE SOVIETTES

SttN: Annie, how did you learn embroidery?

AH: My mother and grandmother did a lot of embroidery and sewing, so my mom taught me when I was a kid. I still have my first piece—it was a rainbow with a cloud at the top.

SttN: What kinds of materials do you like?

AH: I like to embroider onto pillowcases and tea towels, although lately I've been stitching onto clothes a little bit.

SttN: What are you making now?

AH: My mom gave me some old pillowcases with fancy edges. I'm using one of my grandma's old paisley patterns on them. The patterns have been folded for a long time, and the ink bled over to the opposite side of the page. So, it's been a little messy, but oh well.

SttN: What's the best homemade gift you've ever gotten?

AH: My sister gave me the first quilt she made.

SttN: Future projects?

AH: I have a pink lightning bolt tattoo on my right wrist that my best friend and I got almost ten years ago, and I embroidered it onto my jean jacket over the same place it is on my arm. Since then I've been meaning to do the flowers [that are] on my left shoulder, but I haven't even begun to start.

SttN: Do you stitch on tour?

AH: I tried to do a bird on the back pocket of my jeans last summer, but it didn't turn out very well.

SttN: Please recommend some records to stitch by.

AH: Maybe Sonic Youth or Tom Waits, or maybe classical music or NPR.

Kim Coletta of Jawbox

SttN: You're a whiz at domestic stuff. What's your favorite food genre?
 KC: I love so many types of food. It's hard to narrow it down. I like cooking rustic Italian and Asian food the best. With my son, I enjoy baking—muffins, cookies, cakes, breads—because it's really gratifying, and a great way to teach him food science.

SttN: What are your best dishes?

KC: I'm always trying out new recipes. I rarely have failures because I make sure to choose recipes that seem likely to succeed. Speed is important to me now that I have a child, because he can't wait hours for dinner.

SttN: You were in one of D.C.'s most influential and gripping post-punk bands, and you started DeSoto Records. I read an interview in which you were described [by Travis Morrison of the Dismemberment Plan] as "one of the engines of American punk rock," which I think is right-on. What was it about your character or upbringing that compelled you to take the DIY approach to music and work?

KC: Growing up in New Hampshire had something to do with it. I grew up in a real Yankee household where we were expected to help out with chores, gardening, cooking... My dad was a real handyman and did everything himself. That had a real impact on me. I moved to D.C. for college and joined what was and still is an incredible DIY scene. I learned so much about the DIY ethic working at Dischord alongside Ian MacKaye for many years. I consider him both my mentor and my peer.

SttN: What skill, art, or craft do you want to learn?

KC: This is a loaded question because you know I want to learn to knit! I've been absolutely unsuccessful at teaching myself!

SttN: You should get Jenny Toomey to teach you. She's officially *Slave to the Needles'* favorite rock'n'roll knitter. You've done some work with her nonprofit, Future of Music, right?

KC: Jenny and Kristin [Thomson] do an amazing job with the Future of Music Coalition. I did speak on a panel at the 2004 conference and it was a lot of fun and very educational. I came away learning a lot about current digital issues.

SttN: Who would you want to paint your portrait?

KC: Botero would have done a good job with me because his people were always curvy and so am I!

SttN: Is DeSoto still going to release a series of children's records? What's the impulse behind that project?

KC: I do have so many friends who have kids now. I wanted to do a kiddie record because it seems like fun, [and] the kids could use more cool music. And as a gift for my son and his buddies. I have four tracks in now and they're amazing! It's a slow project, but it'll be done eventually.

SttN: What's the best homemade gift you've ever gotten?

KC: When my son, Nick, was born several people made him blankets and I cherish all of them. One was from his paternal grandmother and was knit in a beautiful mint green color. Another was a quilt that had a cool pattern and musical notes on the border. The third blanket was from Harris Klahr's mom. He's the guitarist and vocalist in Q and Not U, and although I didn't know his mom at all, she was showing her appreciation for our friendship with her son, and for the birth of our child. That blanket was white... Nick still enjoys that one and likes traveling with it.

SttN: What are you going to grow in your garden this summer?

KC: Oh, so much good stuff! A big maple tree in our backyard was hit by lightning last summer, died, and was cut down. It was an amazing tree, but [it limited] gardening back there to shade gardening. Now I can finally plant vegetables. I'm growing seedlings inside for three types of tomatoes. Nick, who's almost four years old, chose one type—orange cherry tomatoes—because orange is his favorite color. I'm also growing sweet peppers, hot peppers, basil, parsley, and mint.

SttN: Any tips?

KC: You have to be careful with the mint family because it's a perennial and spreads like crazy. What I do with plants like that is carefully break the bottom out of a large clay pot with a hammer, then sink the pot in the soil so only about an inch is above ground and put the mint in there. The pot constrains the plant from spreading all over the place.

Mirah

SttN: Mirah, who taught you how to knit?

M: My grandmother taught me when I was ten or so. I started a bright green acrylic scarf that I never finished. I didn't knit again until I was sixteen and staying with friends in Norway for a few months. I really, really started knitting when I was twenty and lived in Norway for a whole year. It helped pass the dark winter. [I made] a pair of mittens that I gave as a present to my sister. I cursed all through the ribbing. They turned out lumpy and misshapen, but darling.

SttN: What skill, art, or craft have you always wanted to learn?

M: Carpentry and construction.

SttN: What's the best homemade gift you've ever received?

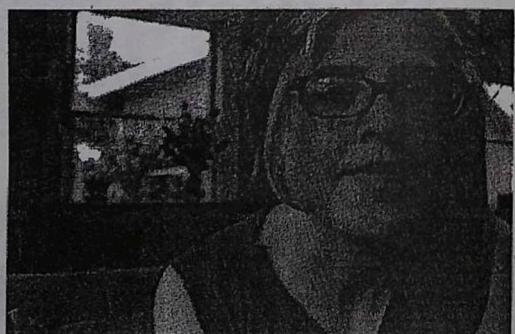
M: My best friend, and housemate for a long time, Ariana, made me a set of cloth and wood screens, to shield my bedroom from the living room, which she had to walk through to get to her bedroom bedroom, which actually had a door. They were practical and beautiful. [And] my mom made me a painting that I used for one of my record covers, that's another beloved gift.

SttN: Are you knitting anything right now?

M: I've got my needles with me, but haven't got any yarn...

SttN: What's your favorite place to get yarn?

M: I've gotten beautiful yarn in Iceland and in Argentina, and from



Short Mountain Radical Fairy Sanctuary in Tennessee.

SttN: What kinds of yarn do you like?

M: I like the colors that sheep come in naturally: browns, whites, and blacks.

SttN: Who would you want to paint your portrait?

M: My mother. Or Alice Neel.

SttN: I love the portrait she did of Nancy Selvage in the '60s.

M: I was looking at a book of Alice Neel's work at my mom's house the other day. So great.

SttN: Music to knit by?

M: Morrissey--*You Are the Quarry*.

Photo by Emily Kingan

Anne Heller of the Austin Theremonic Orchestra

SttN: Anne, other instruments require that we touch them to create a sound—by plucking, pressing, striking, blowing, whatever. But the theremin—it's special. You play it without touching it. How did you become interested in such an unusual instrument?

AH: I saw the documentary *Theremin: An Electronic Odyssey* [1994, dir. by Steven M. Martin] and fell in love with the sound and the creative possibilities of the theremin. I bought a theremin kit from Robert Moog's studio... Lars [Nilssen] and I put the kit together at a leisurely pace and completed it in a month or so. We both experimented with playing [it], but I enjoyed it more, due to the elements of chance involved.

SttN: So, that reversal is part of what attracts you to the theremin. One usually plays music to provoke movement, but you have to dance to get sounds from the theremin?

AH: Yes. But in all truth playing any instrument requires controlled movement. Playing theremin is very similar to dance, in that patterns and rhythmic movements create and change the pitch and duration of the theremin's sound. It's like playing negative space.

SttN: Some readers of *Slave to the Needles* will be unfamiliar with this instrument. Can you recommend some pop or rock records on which we can hear the theremin?

SttN: Aurora Plastics Company plays loud, intense, organic experimental improv music using guitars, theremin, keys, loops, and drums... APC compositions are used to score my super-8mm experimental short films, and some comedy shorts that Lars and I have done.

SttN: Anne, what's the best homemade gift you've ever gotten?

AH: Two crocheted blankets that my Slovakian grandmother made before she died.

SttN: What skill, art, or craft do you want to learn?

AH: Scuba diving, so I can film under water.

Wynne Greenwood of Tracy + the Plastics

SttN: Considering its historical position in the world of women's work, can knitting and other home arts fit into a concept of feminism?

WG: Of course. I think right now is a really important time to be thinking of home and what that means for us as individuals and as communities. With "home" comes a history of placement, sexism, hierarchy. It's so important to be able to shift those things and rearrange. There was this art group, Fort Thunder, that knitted these body suits—I saw one of their knitted suits at the Whitney a couple years ago—it reshaped knitting, and in a way allows for the reshaping of home, housewife, craft, art...

SttN: Please explain the Home Arts renaissance.

WG: I think it's about money, community, time, meditation, and access.

SttN: Do you knit? Sew?

WG: I tried to knit on a cross-country trip a few years ago. My attention span is too short, but I do hope someday I'll have enough ability... to be able to knit a sweater. But I love to sew sometimes. My mom has always quilted and made some clothes, and I started making scrunchies in sixth grade to barter at this Barter Day we had. After that I moved on to such fashions as a floral vest in seventh grade, silver space pants in high school, and some hand-pieced striped pants that are actually incredible. I sew when I think of a piece of clothing I can't find anywhere... Or when I need curtains. Right now I'm making curtains for this

room in the basement I'm turning into my studio.

SttN: What kinds of materials do you like?

WG: I like ribbon, wool, sweatshirt material...

SttN: Describe the best homemade gift you've ever gotten.

WG: My dear friend Sarah Adams is an incredible maker of clothes, and she

just want to say, "You know, waking up in the morning is a political act." But... there's different ways of being political and of saying it, or not saying it. It's just—I come from a community that believes making art, making a gesture, making a movement, is revolutionary.

"I come from a community that believes making art, making a gesture, making a movement, is revolutionary."

SttN: Do you have advice for girls and women who want to make music?

WG: Try a lot of different instruments until you find the one—or two, or three—that feels right to you, and if something doesn't fit in your hands right at first, you can always come back to it because it might fit different later. I always come back to the guitar. It's never an instrument I've "mastered" or felt really comfortable with, but as I get older and become more familiar with other ways of making music, I get a really big thrill from picking up the weird guitar. It's exciting to not have any idea what I'm doing.

SttN: Who'd be a better knitter, Nikki or Cola?

WG: The first time I interacted through dialogue with the video was this short scene where Nikki is showing me some wall tapestries she wove of man-eating animals, like the Bengal tiger. So, Nikki.

Jessica Jordan of the Polyphonic Spree

SttN: Who was it to perform at the Nobel Peace Prize concert? Did you meet Wangari Maathai?

JJ: Oh! That was one of my favorite things to participate in with the Polyphonic Spree. It was beyond real and such on honor. The whole time I was there, I was like, "What am I going to be able to do that I wish I could have done?" Maathai, I think Tim [DeLaughter] was able to. Her speech was so motivating and inspiring. When I saw it broadcast in the United States, they had edited some beautiful parts of her speech.

SttN: With more than twenty musicians in the Polyphonic Spree, how do you keep track of everybody on tour?

JJ: Luckily, I'm the one who keeps track. But from my point of view it's really not too bad; there are obviously a couple of stragglers, but everyone is kind of keeping tabs on who's where. It's a family. A big, sometimes very smelly—especially on tour—family.

SttN: Talk about your clothing line.

I embroidered or appliquéd vintage and original designs onto t-shirts, tees, and aprons. I try to use recycled Army t-shirts for most of my designs. They're so soft and comfortable. I have a lot of designs from silks or old books, but some of my favorite patterns have been drawings from my own children. My boys, Julian and Sonny, have drawn me some of the coolest octopus spiders and elephants I've ever seen. I have these kind of cheesy labels I put inside each finished project. The brand is Kush Kuhn. I sell at Good Records on Greenville Avenue in Dallas.

SttN: Who taught you how to knit?

JJ: My younger sister Khan is the true craft queen of the family. She taught me to knit and embroider.

SttN: Are you knitting anything right now?

JJ: A small shawl out of recycled cotton yarn. There is recycled Army t-shirt material crocheted that lies the band to the back of the neck. I'm debating attaching a bird appliqué I made.

SttN: Do you prefer big needles or small?

JJ: I love big needles. Big needles look good, but I haven't gotten around to using them yet. I'm currently knitting with small bamboo [needles],

which I love, especially for the renewability aspect. What's your favorite shade of green? What's your favorite color?

SttN: My dad made me Christmas ornaments when I was a kid. He cut my name, in cursive, out of a small rectangular piece of copper. That was the buckle. She attached a vintage men's tie and looped it through for the belt part. It's so special. I keep it in a jar forever.

SttN: Who, dead or alive, would you want to paint your portrait?

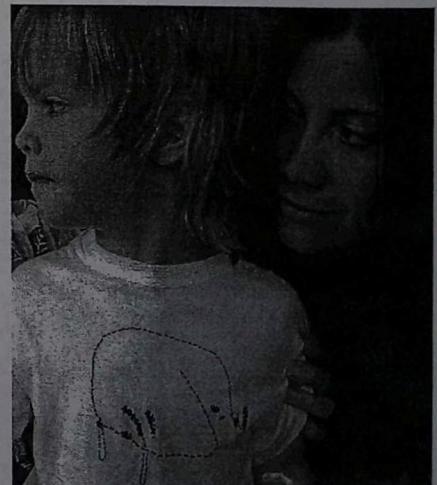
JJ: My husband, I think.

SttN: Anyday! I think it's a project!

JJ: If I could knit some throws for my boy's new bunk bed that would be heirloom-worthy, I would feel that that was such an accomplishment!

SttN: Where do you go to buy your fabrics?

JJ: You know, I already find all of my favorite materials from Goodwill and thrift stores. I love looking something used and reinventing it. But when it comes to the basics, like needles and embroidery hoops, I usually go to Hobby Lobby. It's close and it has this homey vibe that reminds me of my mom.



Julian and his mama, Jessica

Richard Buckner

Interview by Randy Nelson

SttN: How did you learn to knit?

Jill [Richard's girlfriend]: My grandmother taught me. I've been knitting since, I don't know, maybe ten or twelve.

SttN: What kinds of projects do you usually do?

J: All kinds of stuff. I design knitting patterns, too. But I make stuff for women, usually, because I can fit it to myself. It's easier to make stuff that's in my size. And I do all sorts of stuff like hats and scarves. I've been doing a lot of fingerless mittens for this winter, because you can't smoke in bars in New York anymore, so you have to stand outside.

SttN: Do you knit for Richard?

J: Yeah, I knit for everyone.

RB: She's knitting something for a woman on my label. Laura just had a baby, so she's doing a little jumper for her. We got the yarn today at this place here in town.

J: Yeah, there's a beautiful knitting store in Seattle—Hilltop I think it's called. I got some yarn to make Laura a little "congratulations baby" jumper. It's great to give people stuff that you made with your hands.

SttN: What's the best homemade gift you've ever received?

(Long pause.) Or the worst, if you can think of that.

RB: The worst one I couldn't really mention, because the person might read this. I mean, once a year you get something where you're like, "Wow." Homemade gifts! I don't know. You know once in a while you have a friend who's an artist, and you get something and you're like you don't know what to do with it. And it's a friend, so it goes up, because... it's a friend. They come over.

Yeah, yeah.

What do you think knitting and home arts have had such a resurgence recently?

J: Well, you know, people are wanting to be close again to things they use. It's like, for so long people have been moving farther and farther and farther away from the things they use. The tomatoes you're eating are from Chile instead of a couple miles away. This sweater you're wearing is knit in Taiwan by some child. Things are so mass-produced. Everything is Target, Ikea, and cookie-cutter-chop-chop-chop. The

craft movement and knitting, it lets you be close to things again. Like you have ownership of the thing, because it's exactly yours and only yours. I mean, even people that follow commercial knitting patterns—like I work in a knitting store in Westport, Connecticut that my friend owns—I see these women, and ten women will make, from the same commercial pattern, ten totally different, interesting things. It's great. And I think it's good for people to make. I think people have a desire to make. What was your first project?

Well, I remember the first project that I ever really, really loved. It was this blue mohair scarf that I made. I wore it to a bar in Albany, and someone stole it out of my coat. They left the coat. They left the wallet. I went to the bar to get a drink, and I came back and the scarf was missing.

Were you honored in a weird way?

No, I was pissed off.

What advice do you have for the young knitter?

The patterns are just suggestions... [The] small changes you make [are what] makes things different. Sometimes it takes trying eight different needles and four different stitches to make something exactly right, but after all that experimentation, really amazing stuff can happen. Like lately I've been dyeing yarn in my microwave... I've been getting cheap kitchen cotton that you buy in craft stores and putting it in glass bowls and just like pouring Rit dye on it and microwaving it and seeing what happens. It's sort of like you have no control. Like I don't really know how it's going to turn out—like if it stripes and where it's going to stripe. It's fun to see the different things you can do when you just start messing around.

Have you thought of any knitting/music collaborations? Like the Knitted 7" cover or something?

I'm sure her needles and stuff like that will come into play on percussion at some point. I use everything.

Records to knit by. Any suggestions?

We just got some stuff next door [at Bop Street Records]. Stuff like Gertrude Stein reading her own stuff on vinyl from the 'thirties.

T. S. Eliot. *The Songs of Middle Earth*.

Yeah, they sing in Elvish.

SttN: You sew. What do you make?

HY: I make pillows from old t-shirts. I have an excellent Lynyrd Skynyrd pillow.

SttN: Tell me about a good project gone bad.

HY: I've destroyed clothes trying to alter them.

Sometimes I customize clothes, with cool buttons and patches, and I have to pass them on, because they aren't me.

SttN: Where do you buy materials?

HY: I have stuff from thrift stores and garage sales that I can't wait to work with.

SttN: What skill, art, or craft do you want to learn?

HY: Knitting!

SttN: What's the best homemade gift you've ever gotten?

HY: A cotton blanket from when I was little that has a

John Herndon of Tortoise

SttN: John, I understand that you come from a long line of textiles folk. Who taught you how to do embroidery?

JH: I can't remember exactly who taught my family who did some embroidery. I think I learned a couple of basic stitches, and just taught myself.

SttN: What kinds of materials do you like?

JH: I've only really stitched on canvas using embroidery thread. Embroidery thread is a pain to use. I keep thinking I'm going to try some other materials, but I just haven't found anything yet. I hope to do more experimenting when I'm making some Christmas gifts...

SttN: What's your favorite place to buy supplies in Chicago?

JH: I just go to JoAnne Fabric because it's close to the pet store.

SttN: Have you taught anyone how to do crewel work?

JH: Someone could learn what I know in a minute.

SttN: Were you an arty kid?

"Man, I can't keep my hands on a finished piece to save my life. The motivation to do stuff, or at least to finish it, has always been to give gifts."

JH: Mostly I drew a lot.

SttN: What projects do you remember doing?

JH: I did make some rudimentary weavings, and did some needlepoint. I feel like those were my first projects growing up at my house, but I can't remember what they were right now. Was knitting too much a project? Once I started playing music, that was pretty much it. All I did was practice and draw. I didn't do much fiber art until recently.

SttN: Do you have any finished projects, or give them away?

JH: Man, I can't keep my hands on a finished piece to save my life. The motivation to do stuff, or at least to finish it, for me, has always been to give gifts.

SttN: That's a skill, art, or craft you want to learn.

JH: I'd like to learn how to paint with oils. I'd like to learn how to play the bass like [Tortoise's bass player] Doug McCombe. I'd like to learn how to sing and play the piano. Someday I want to make art, and make stuffed animals.

SttN: Please recommend some records to stitch by.

JH: Most Allison, *The Best of Marc Allison*. Bad Brains, *ROIR Sessions*. Eric Dolphy, *Out to Lunch*. Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys, *God's Country*. Sun Ra, *Angels and Demons at Play*. Anything by MF Doom—the Madlibian record is a crewel masterpiece!



Hilary York

blue handkerchief pattern on one side and Redgry Ann and Andy fabric on the other. Explain the home arts revival among young people.

I think many people are tired of being consumers of products that aren't good for the environment, your skin, or the world. It's empowering and satisfying to create. And it's like being a kid again, making stuff.

Please recommend some records to knit by. Tom Waits, *Closing Time*. Iron and Wine, *Our Endless Numbered Days*. Starsailor, *Love is Here*. David Bowie, *Hunky Dory*.

Thanks, Hilary. Thanks, Aimee, it was fun!

Melissa York of the Butchies

SttN: Why did you start knitting?

MY: My girlfriend thought it would be a good way for me to stop chewing my fingers, so I got all these knitting books. But it's so hard to understand those diagrams.

SttN: It's so much easier to learn from a human.

MY: Yeah. I keep thinking I should find some old lady to teach me. There was a store in Durham that offered classes, but they closed before I could do it. So I basically taught myself.

SttN: What kinds of materials do you like?

MY: [pause]

SttN: Do you care?

MY: No. I'm just refamiliarizing myself with knitting right now, so I just take whatever and it's all about the knitting. I'm just keeping my fingers busy, you know? But if I did a scarf or whatever, I'd probably be more choosy.

SttN: What other crafty stuff do you do?

MY: I just bought a screenprinting kit. I really used to be into that. I want to get into doing more colors, more layers. Also, I just got a copy of that magazine *Ready Made*. Have you seen it?

SttN: Yeah.

MY: It's all stuff you make from reusing materials. There are a few projects I could actually see myself doing. But next I'm going to strip the doors in my house.

SttN: Do you knit on tour?

MY: My girlfriend bought me a beautiful yarn container that I took on tour. It's vintage, I love it. I was like, 'This is it, I'm going to make something!'

SttN: Are you knitting anything right now?

MY: So far I've made headbands. The hardest part was the end...

SttN: Binding off?

MY: Yeah.

SttN: Do you know how to crochet?

MY: I've been thinking about getting into crochet. I bought the needles.

SttN: A lot of people say crochet is easier than knitting.

MY: What do you think?

SttN: Well, I don't really know how to crochet.

MY: Seriously, though, all I can knit is a headband. Do you think I'm a knitter?

SttN: You knit. You're a knitter. Nathan Cowing [of Pegasvs] told me his first project, years ago, was an ugly headband. Do you know what he knits nowadays?

MY: What?

SttN: Fishermen's sweaters!



MY: Oh my god! Wow!

SttN: Who's better at knitting, you or Kaia [Wilson]?

MY: Kaia doesn't know how to knit. Her girlfriend does, though.

SttN: What's your take on the Home Arts renaissance?

MY: It's great! It's fun. People have such great ideas. Especially when you're not making much money—it's good for making gifts, even though it can be hard to have enough time to make stuff.

SttN: You're a drummer, so I'm sure you've considered the possibility of knitting with drumsticks.

MY: [laughing] I think that's an awesome idea.

SttN: Recommend some records to knit by.

MY: Zero Seven, *Simple Things*, Air, *Talkie Walkie*.

SttN: Thank you so much, Mel!

Lupe Nuñez-Fernandez of the Pipas

SttN: Lupe, what are you making right now?

LNF: A yarn guitar, though [I'm] worried it may turn out too floppy. And, a sweater which was inspired by two things: the Dalton brothers [from the French Cartoon "Lucky Luke"], who used to wear a barrel whenever they got cleaned out at the gambling saloon, and my wish to avoid sleeves. So, it's like a barrel sweater, sort of like a loose tube with two straps to hold it up over my shoulders.

SttN: Where do you buy yarn?

LNF: Preferably old and poorly lit environments where everything looks like a deal or dead stock. I'm definitely not your yarn purist. The best yarn I ever bought was at the thrift store on Harrow Road in West London—fat, beautiful skeins of hot, hot colors at ninety-nine pence a pop. Soft as a

kitten and totally synthetic, but quality that lasts through many washes. Recently I actually went to John Lewis, which Pam Berry [of the Pines] highly recommended, and I was so surprised that I could actually afford some good yarn. I got four bundles of dark grey baby merino and still had change for some circular needles and a doughnut. It's a nice and unassuming place.

It's a nice and unassuming place. "I got four bundles of dark grey baby merino and still had change for some circular needles and a doughnut."

two little photo-journal books that my friend Tommy gave me last year.

Big needles or small?

LNF: Right now, small.

SttN: Tell me about the skill, art, or craft you want to learn.

LNF: I'd really like to learn how to bind books. I'd also love to learn how to make old-style photographs. On salt paper, that kind of thing.

SttN: What projects do you

remember doing?

What's the color of music?" and that sort of thing. It helped me think in a way that was much more intuitive. They let us make a mess.

SttN: Recommend some music to knit by.

LNF: Any early Bob Dylan. The Embassy. *Caveat Emptor* by the Cannanes.

Nouela Johnston of Mon Frere

SttN: Nouela, what kind of yarn do you like?
NJ: Any yarn with a picture of a baby on the package. It's always soft and pastel.
SttN: How long have you been crocheting?
NJ: My grandma taught me when I was about eight.
SttN: What are you working on now?
NJ: The standard Christmas presents: scarves, mittens, beanies. And a hot-pink and yellow laptop carrier.
SttN: What skill, art, or craft do you want to learn?
NJ: I suck ass at anything involving a

sewing machine. I tried to make a shirt once, and it came out looking like a dishrag. I can't imagine how awesome it would be if I could make my own clothes. I mean, it would be truly awesome.

SttN: What's the best homemade gift you've ever gotten?
I told a friend that I liked the smell of grass, and she proceeded to make me grass soap for my birthday! It was an awesome thought, and I do love the smell of grass, but not so much slathered all over my body.
SttN: Thanks, Nouela.

ANNA FRIZ

SttN: Tell me about a good project gone bad.

AF: I acquired a bag of wool which I decided to knit into a sweater. The problem is, I only had patterns from the depths of the 1980s, and the sweater I liked was in a huge men's size. So I improvised. I just started knitting while mentally comparing it to the patterns in the book without making any notes. I knit most of the body until summer came along, and who wants to be knitting some epic Icelandic wool sweater when it's hot out? When I returned to the sweater in the fall, I realized I'd forgotten what I was up to in the pattern. Plus, [it] seemed a bit small. I unraveled the whole thing, knit to about the same spot, and realized that it was still too small. Unraveled again, knit up to where the situation was, and it was summer again. Last fall I couldn't bear to look at it. So I mailed it all to my crafty mom in Vancouver. She couldn't sort out my notes or intentions either, and unraveled it, planning to [start a fourth one]. Neither of us has touched it since.

SttN: Generally, do you prefer big needles or small?

AF: Most of the time I knit socks, which take four 24 millimeter needles. SttN: What was the atmosphere like in Academia, a feminist radio pirate station at Concordia University, at least at Concordia in the communications department, was very welcoming of eccentric ideas. My thesis project was called *The Clandestine Transmissions of Pirate Jenny*, a story of a

radio mutineer based on the childhood fiction of the little people inside the radio tower and their use of minor media such as a pirate radio transmitter, and staged interventions on community and public radio to elaborate this tale of little people trapped inside the mediated landscape. [I] hoped to challenge standard media practices and re-conceptualize radio as a medium unbound by its current one-to-many broadcast format.

SttN: You've done some work with Studio XX, the multimedia resource center for women. What obstacles remain for women when it comes to getting access to and becoming comfortable with information technology?
It depends on the industry. Many women in North America now have access to computers. The challenges that I have at the Studio, and that I've seen through other research projects, is getting women involved with the back end of technical development, specifically programming and system administration. Women still face a lot of sexism, discrimination, as well as ongoing social barriers from childhood onward in these areas—the so-called hard sciences as opposed to applied sciences.

What are you knitting right now?
I'm just finishing a shawl, hand-dyed kid and silk in shades of red and black. It was supposed to be an instant-gratification project, since the needles are pretty big and it's just one hank of wool to knit. But I feel like it will never end.

Thanks, Anna.

Mia Doi Todd

SttN: Do you make your own clothes?
Yes, I make most of my skirts and handbags. Also, some jackets.

SttN: What are you working on right now?
Ideas for a new spring and summer wardrobe. I tend to wear the same batch of skirts for a year or so, then my taste shifts and I make some new ones.

SttN: What kinds of materials do you like?
I like clothes that I can wear and wear and wear, and wash in the washing machine... so I usually work with sturdy cotton, often upholstery fabric. I've collected fabric along my travels [to] Southeast Asia, Japan, the Middle East. For jackets or bags, things that don't need as much washing, I break out my collection of hand-woven fabrics—batik, ikat, old kimono...

SttN: Tell me about a project that went wrong.



MDT: I've wasted lots of fabric pursuing some vision I had. For a while I was working on a coat inspired by Central Asian herders' dress. I have many failed Technicolor dream coats in the cupboard.

SttN: Are you interested in Japanese needlecraft, like Sashiko? Did you learn anything about sewing in the Japanese style when you lived overseas?

MDT: I have some of that needlecraft, but I've never tried any. I used to do needlepoint—I made a very beautiful pillow for my mother. I worked on it freehand. There was no preliminary sketch. It's a picture of a bird looking towards a bay and the ocean.

SttN: Who would you want to paint your portrait?

Egon Schiele.

Mia, please recommend some records to stitch by.

Ethiopiques, Volume 4. Caetano Veloso, Joia. Fleetwood Mac, Tusk. Kruder and Dorfmeister, K and D Sessions. Joni Mitchell, Ladies of the Canyon.

Shannon Goodwin of Cougar Party

SttN: Shannon, who taught you how to knit?

SG: My mom's been teaching me how to knit for the last twenty years. I always remember how to knit, just not how to cast on. I had a renewed interest in learning a couple of years ago and so I called my mom one night. She thought it was great and [said] she would teach me next time I came to visit. I,

however, had the misguided notion that if I knit a scarf for a boy I liked, he would have choice but to like me back. So I had to learn that night. I had my mom get her needles out and talk me through casting on over the phone.

SttN: Did you make the scarf?
SG: I ended up with a beautiful striped scarf, and a love of knitting, but not the boy.

SttN: What skill, art, or craft do you want to learn?

SG: I've found all these old craft books and magazines lately, and they have the best crochet projects in them. So I would really like to learn how to crochet, if only to make this amazing toque. It's a helmet and it has fancy circular patches over the ears.

SttN: Tell me about a good project gone bad.

SG: I've had lofty goals that ended up working out but were ultimately stressful. My old band, Mach Tiver, knitted the packaging for the first hundred CDs of our final release.

SttN: Please recommend some records to knit by.

Tom Waits, Closing Time. Lucero, Tennessee. K-O-S, Joyful Rebellion.

Naomi Yang of Damon and Naomi



StIN: You just got back from Japan! How was the tour?
NY: It was fabulous. We love going to Japan and it was especially fun because we arranged to have a few days off in Tokyo. We had time to walk around and shop and look at everything. We got lost a lot in Tokyo, but that was part of the adventure. One thing I like about Japan is the focus on detail and craftsmanship. Everything is presented beautifully—the food is arranged so carefully, and if you receive a present it is wrapped in some crazy way in lovely paper, tied with a tiny string. I'm always trying to reconstruct the package after opening it, and it's always a mystery!

StIN: What's the best homemade gift you've ever gotten?

NY: I just received, on our tour to Korea, a beautiful ring that a fan made for me. It's a chunky, it's a really large, chunky-shaped green stone bound in a dark metal wire that wraps all around the stone and then forms a ring around your finger. The woman who made it put it on my keyboard while I was playing, and I put it on my finger right away. Another homemade gift that I loved was from my oldest friend who made me "three-ginger" cookies and sent them to me in a crazy tin. That really cheered me up on a gloomy day.

StIN: Naomi, you sang and played bass in one of the most influential indie rock bands of the late '80s and early '90s, went on to play with Damon [Carey] and now you run the publishing house Exact Change, which you and Damon started. What do you think it is in your personality or upbringing that compels you to take a DIY approach to music and work? I dropped out of a graduate

program in architecture back when we were playing in Galaxie 500. One reason was that the band was much more fun, but a more serious reason was that I realized that what I was doing was too removed from actually making something. You had to figure out a whole design on paper—it was the ancient days before computer design—and then hand the design over to someone else to build it. I wanted to make things myself, to follow through on the steps on my project. So I think that is the approach we have to making music, too. We strive for organic collaboration between musicians. It's a very "handmade" approach: we use real instruments, not sampled instruments, and record in a living room with our friends.

What about Exact Change?

NY: As for our books, I do all the design and so with each book I get to make a tiny version of a "building" that I couldn't make through a computer. In making books, or creating art, I am trying to make a beautiful little experience for someone.

StIN: Did your experiences making

independent music prepare you for running an independent publishing house?

NY: I think it did. By running a band you learn about how things are released and make their way into the channels of distribution. But books are very different from CDs. There's not so much of the pop culture appeal to them. They're even more isolated than independent music.

Exact Change reprints works that have gone out of print, or that were never published in North America. Is there a title that you're most proud of having produced, or reintroduced, to the U.S.?

NY: A personal favorite of mine is Denton Welch. He's an English writer from the 1930s and his books are all memoirs of his teenage and young adult years. He was gay in a time where that was something you had to be very discreet about. We publish three of Welch's books: *In Youth a Picture, Voice through a Cloud, and Maiden Voyage*.

StIN: Which *Exact Change* book do you recommend to readers of *Smart at the Needles*?

NY: I think *The Hearing Trumpet* by Leonora Carrington would be perfect. [Ed. n.t.: *The Hearing Trumpet* is available at http://www.exactchange.com/carrington/hearing_ebooks/carrington.htm.]

StIN: Who would you want to paint your portrait?

NY: I wish I could have my photo taken by Malik Sidibé. He's this great photographer from Bamako, Mali that took a lot of portraits in the 1950s through the '70s of people dressed to kill and often holding big machine guns, or with three watches on their wrist as a status symbol. Everyone always looks fabulous in his photos. They have an amazing sense of light.

NY: What kind of art or craft would you enjoy learning?

NY: I wish I could learn to write and read Japanese, but basic literacy means that you know 2,500 characters, so it's a lot of studying. I would also love to do some graphic design—or maybe I should just learn to sew and then I could do something with all this beautiful fabric that I see.

StIN: Thanks, Naomi!

NY: Thank you!

Sarah Dougher of Cadallaca

StIN: Sarah, when did you take up knitting?

SD: I started knitting when I was an exchange student living in rural Austria when I was sixteen.

StIN: Describe your knitting style.

SD: Euro DIY.

StIN: Who taught you?

SD: Angelika Kobald, the lady I lived with.

StIN: Current knitting project?

SD: Frou-frou scarf for a friend.

StIN: Do you have any favorite knitting books or websites?

SD: *Knitting without Tears*, by Elizabeth Zimmerman.

StIN: What's your take on the Home Arts renaissance?

SD: Especially if you include fashion in the home arts category, it's really exciting here in Portland. It always confuses me when people knit

or sew things that they could buy more cheaply, and they just look the same. If you are going to sew something, at least make something interesting. I'm really into economy, and [the] reuse of materials—modifying already-made things, unraveling sweaters.

StIN: Sarah, you're a DIY heroine: you were one of the founders of Ladyfest, you worked for the Rock'n'Roll Camp for Girls, and you've been

making independent music for at least a decade. What other creative stuff do you do? I now work at Portland's gay paper, *Just Out*. I'm the newseditor here. It's a very creative job. I'm also trying to learn more about embroidery. A lot of it is so cheesy, but I'm trying to

work with an artist friend who can draw. Right now I'm embroidering a great blue heron onto the back and shoulder of a modified trench coat.

StIN: In light of its historical position in the world of women's work, can knitting and other Home Arts fit into a concept of feminism?

SD: I think most crafts as such—and in this I include cooking and intuitive healing practices—are devalued because they are women's work, but I try to ignore that devaluation and just go for it. I grew up learning a lot of different things from my quasi-feminist parents, including how to sew and how to lay wood floors.

StIN: What are you reading right now? **StIN:** Thanks, Sarah.

SD: *Blink*, by Malcolm Gladwell, and old *Smithsonian* magazines.

StIN: Considering your specialized knowledge of mythology, I have to ask you to share a knitting- or weaving-themed myth.

SD: Arachne was a girl who was a very good weaver. She was, unfortunately, also very boastful, and said she could weave better than Athena. She even challenged Athena to a weaving contest. Big mistake. Arachne! So she wove a tapestry that showed all the different ways gods had raped mortals, like the story of Leda and the swan. It was, in fact, very good, and Athena got so angry that she turned her into a spider.

Wendy Atkinson

SttN: Wendy, you told me that when you tried knitting, the results were "scary."
WA: I'm left-handed and you kind of get used to learning things awkwardly in mirror image, but I really struggled with knitting. I would loop it the wrong way and then miss a bunch of stitches. It was really torturous. I started off with the usual scarf project that I had to unravel many times. It was really wide at the beginning and almost a point at the end... Much later a friend wanted to teach me again because I was admiring a sweater she'd knit for herself, but instead I ended up paying her to knit me one. Can you explain the Home Arts renaissance?

WA: There's something powerful about doing something yourself. My CD *Trim* was recorded on a four-track in my apartment. I've mostly played pop music in bands, and this was my first attempt at my own project. If I'd had to record it in a studio I never would have done it. But doing it at home I learned a lot about recording and creating

a CD. It's a wonderful feeling to know that if you want something, a scarf, soap, paper, or even a CD, you can make it yourself. You could buy any of those items, or you can create them yourself and have something unique that you're proud of.

WA: Pinhole photography. That would be fun.
SttN: What was your favorite part of performing at Ladyfest?
WA: Playing with a group of women. I've often played shows where there are no other female performers. It was great to see lots of

"It's so important for women to see other women doing things. It makes it seem possible."

SttN: What special supplies do you need for papermaking? Do you need lots of space?
WA: You need a few special supplies, but you can improvise. Officially you should have a mold and deckle, but this summer I used a cooking splatter screen to make round paper. I usually make paper in my small apartment kitchen. It can be messy, though—I once made paper that ended up a sickly pink color, and I found dried pink pulp around my apartment for weeks.
SttN: What skill, art, or craft do you want to learn next?

women lugging their amps in, sound-checking, organizing the equipment. But the highlight was talking to a young woman afterwards who was saying that she could only play open stages because she was too shy to perform at a regular show. I told her that I'd played an open stage only a couple of weeks before Ladyfest just to have a chance to face my nerves. I think it made her feel like it was possible to make that leap. That was a good feeling and explains why it's so important for women to see other women doing things. It makes it seem possible.

Rozalind MacPhail

SttN: Who taught you how to knit?
RM: My Aunt Elaine. I was about ten, I think, when I learned how to knit my first scarf... I used to love to sit on the train with my Opa—grandfather in Dutch—on Friday nights. I would spend the entire one-hour trip knitting away. I always noticed other ladies on the train knitting as well, and felt all grown up.
SttN: What skill, art, or craft do you want to learn?
RM: Pottery... I love working with my hands.
SttN: What's the best homemade gift you've ever gotten?
RM: There's one in particular I look forward to each year around Christmastime. My Aunt Marion always makes me a special coffee mug... I admire her creativity and love watching her technical skill improve with each new mug.
SttN: Who, dead or alive, would you want to paint your portrait?
RM: Andy Warhol.
SttN: What did you wear to your Cirque du Soleil audition?
RM: A colorful skirt that had silver and blue hues with many layers. My shirt was a transparent, bright blue-ish purple one with silver sequins. Both [were] from a store I absolutely love in Ottawa called Aurajean Boutique.
SttN: Recommend some records to knit by.
RM: Low, *The Great Destroyer*. Elliott Brood, self-titled. Great Lake Swimmer, self-titled. The Acorn, *The Pink Ghosts*.

Alex Sharkey of Brighter

SttN: Name an antiquated art you'd like to see revived.
AS: My great-grandfather was a sign-writer. You can't beat the look of hand-painted signs.
SttN: Ever tried knitting?
AS: Unfortunately not... If I did, I'd love to knit a guitar case. That would be cool, a little impractical.
SttN: Tell me about your creative side.
AS: I spent a happy period in my life busking in Churchill Square in Brighton. Christmas was the most prosperous time for this. I remember one lady being so enthralled, she donated her camera to me, complete with film. I think it was a cry for help. Other than that, I've always loved to draw, and I'd love to write and draw my own graphic novel. Not something with superheroes, but perhaps something semi-autobiographical, like the fantastic *Blankets* by Craig Thompson.
SttN: Who would you want to paint your portrait?
AS: My sister Francesca is an artist of some renown who does big, powerful portraits. However, family aside, I'd go for Hergé, creator of *Tintin*. Maybe he would insert me as a character in one of *Tintin's* adventures, probably as some kind of diamond smuggler.
SUN: You were part of the legendary Sarah Records' roster in the early 'nineties, and your *Sharon Fusay* has been praised as one of the very best releases by a post-Sarah band. Is there a difference between how you approached making music back then and now?
AS: I suppose the difference is that creating a song back then [I'd] make a demo and then go to a studio to record the finished article, whereas now I create the whole process at home. It gives you more time to develop an idea without the time constraints inflicted by working in a studio.
SttN: Alex, what skill, art, or craft do you want to learn?
AS: I'd love to improve my drawing skills—getting a character to look the same when you draw them at different angles. It's very difficult! Also, breathing fire like the man at the circus. I think that would be useful. Please recommend some records to knit by.
AS: The Muli Historical Society, Us, The Beach Boys, Pet Sounds. Saint Etienne, *Finisterre*.

Claudia Gonson of Magnetic Fields

SttN: Tell me about your first knitting experience.

CG: I'm not really a knitter, although I have knitted. The things I knit usually end up Dr. Seussian, growing and shrinking in size and dimension, seemingly at their own will. That said, I enjoy knitting. I just sort of suck at it.

SttN: What's the best homemade gift you've ever received?

CG: I just received it last month. My amazing friend Genis in Spain made me a handbag out of the most beautiful carpetbag material, a violent red velvet flower print with deep green leaves. I treasure it. I still can't believe it exists.

SttN: What skill, art, or craft have you always wanted to learn?

CG: Oh, millions. Glass-blowing. Bread-baking. Making major motion pictures. Puppetry. Soup. Animation. Dressing up. Gardening. Painting miniatures. Or, anything miniature. Toy theater. Dioramas.

SttN: You told me your grandmother was a "knitting matriarch."

CG: My Russian grandma knit all my grandpa's socks by hand in grey cashmere. She also knit dresses, suits, jackets, and millions of sweaters. She knit my mom these beautiful women's suits in the '50s and early '60s, jackets with huge buttons and matching skirts with silk lining. But the outstanding personal example of my grandmother's knitting was this hilarious object she made while I was in high school in the 80s. It was this shade of puke green. It had matching running pants and a big thick sweater top. It was grotesque. I adored it and wore it all the time. Of course, some asshole friend stole it.

SttN: Were you an arty kid?

CG: Not really. Musical, yes.

SttN: What kinds of literature excite you?

CG: Proust, Virginia Woolf, Faulkner, Henry James. I'm excited by a lot of periods of writing... nineteenth- and twentieth-century American fiction, mysteries and crime, fantasy and sci-fi, Victorians, Dickens...

SttN: What's the connection between the different kinds of art you do—music, writing, crafts?

CG: My musicality is hardwired, [like there's] a song in my head or music playing around me whether I want it to or not. It's not particularly



relaxing, although at times it can be joyful. Writing doesn't come naturally, but... it's enlightening, and therapeutic. Crafts are a third kind of expression, less difficult than getting myself to write, but not as natural as being musical. Also therapeutic, in a totally un-anxious, uncompetitive way. You make something and it's kind of a mess, but who cares? No one is judging.

SttN: Tell me about a good project that went bad.

CG: I became obsessive about making a short film. I wrote a script, and got actors, and got a DP, and arranged for a two-day shoot. I had a complete nervous fit and didn't finish. I shot a lot of it, but I couldn't complete it. I spent two years after that beating myself up for not finishing... I still wish I had, when I see films that remind me of it.

SttN: What are your current projects?

CG: I'm hell-bent on trying to write the story of last year, when the band played fifty-seven shows and we all sort of slowly went insane. Musically, at the moment we're making some recordings of theater songs, which is fun. Next week we're recording a song with twelve ukuleles.

SttN: Thanks, Claudia.

CG: You're welcome!

James Hepler of Sorry About Dresden

SttN: What's the hardest thing about knitting?

JH: Unknitting. I find it really difficult to go backwards when I make a mistake. I call all of my mistakes trademarks, anyway.

SttN: Big needles or small?

JH: For some reason, small. But it takes so much longer.

SttN: Are you knitting anything right now?

JH: I'm between projects. I finished up a really tedious scarf and decided to take a short break. I'll be cranking up again in a week or so.

SttN: Sounds like you have something in mind. Is it someone's birthday or something? What

are you going to make next?

JH: Well, I'm going on vacation to Montana and Wyoming. Hopefully I won't have any trouble boarding a plane with knitting needles. I don't know what to make, honestly—I was toying with the idea of a dog sweater. But part of me doesn't want to become a dresser of dogs. I was going to knit a Terrible Towel, since I'm a big Pittsburgh Steelers fan.

SttN: Do you get special attention as a male knitter? Fanfare at the coffee shop?

JH: I actually did receive

fanfare at the coffee shop! It's not as fun as when I get the opposite reaction. Some guys just don't understand that the dude they're making fun of is the only guy sitting with a half dozen lovely ladies.

SttN: Do you usually keep your finished objects or give them away?

JH: I lose them. The first scarf I knitted disappeared. There have been sightings around campus. This scarf was distinguished by a nicely rounded end, the result of my somehow adding a stitch every row or so for the first twenty rows.

SttN: Where's your favorite place to get yarn?

JH: I'm not good enough to deserve fancy yarn, so I hit A.C. Moore because it's close and inexpensive.

a lifetime to complete. I guess I'd better get started.

SttN: Recommend some records to knit by.

JH: Anything by Jonathan Richman or Emmitt Rhodes. Ladybug Transistor, Albemarle

"I was toying with the idea of a dog sweater. But part of me doesn't want to become a dresser of dogs."

SttN: Doubts and fears aside, what is your fantasy knitting project? Cable-knit sweater? Hammock?

JH: Ooh, hammock! That's an ideal I'd really like to make an elaborate afghan... Heirloom-style, something that takes

Sound. Vic Chestnutt, Ghetto Bells. Anything by Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, but especially Abattoir Blues.

SttN: Thanks, James.

JH: Thanks very much!

Zoe Dodd and Bennett Jones-Phillips of the Bayonettes

StN: Is your band on a mission?
BJP: A mission to self-destruct maybe.

ZD: Yes, to have fun, meet loads of awesome kids, tour, and put out some records. My personal mission is to feminize the punk rock world.

StN: Zoe, who taught you how to knit?

ZD: My mom taught me how to knit when I was six. We made a rainbow-colored sweater together. It was really cool. We knitted all these squares of primary color and then my mom sewed it all together.

StN: Was the sweater for you, or for your mom?

ZD: For me, and it was really cute.

StN: Do you still knit?

ZD: I took up knitting again a few years ago when I worked at this call center with my friend Natalie. She and I would teach each other stitches while talking on the phone. Gotta love hands-free.

StN: What's the best homemade gift you've ever gotten?

BJP: Homemade dolls... collect dolls and things, [and] homemade ones are amazing because they're personal, and usually demented.

ZD: My grandma and grandma from England were avid knitters. When I was young they knit me and my brother matching sweaters on the knitting machine. Mine was dark green and his was navy blue. They had knit a leaf emblem on the right-hand side, and they thought it was the Canadian maple leaf, but in actuality it was a marijuana leaf. I wore that sweater almost every single day.

StN: When did you learn how to sew?

BJP: I took a sewing class for a couple years in high school. The first year it was called "clothing" and the second year it was called "fashion"—oh, fancy! We did get to make stuff but there was also a bullshit component about good grooming... We were given drawings of boys and girls that we had to draw clothing for and I always made them filthy punks.

ZD: Sewing used to be my number one passion! As a chubby girl I find it really hard to find clothing that fits me. I am constantly

altering clothes to fit. I also like the punk rock aesthetic of homemade clothes and have been making shit for myself since I was a pre-teen.

StN: What was your first project?

BJP: I started a leopard-print vest like Sid Vicious so I bought some fabric and a pattern and made one. Then in that class I made plaid pants, and a leopard-print button-up shirt which



was actually pretty nice. Leopard-print was punk then, now it's totally Shania Twain. Wait, do Americans know who that is?

StN: Totally. "Whose Bed Have Your Boots Been Under?" was a crossover pop hit.

BJP: That's unfortunate.

StN: Do you sew with a machine or by hand?

BJP: Now I'm going to be



exposed as the fake I am. My mom bought me a sewing machine after my success with that damn class and I was excited about it, but I never really learned how to use the thing properly because it was different from the one at school. I hardly ever used it. Zoë actually uses it now.

StN: What's the best place to buy materials in Toronto?

ZD: Ronni, Lettuce Knit, and the Knit Cafe. What Toronto is lacking is a really good craft store. In the Yukon, where I'm from, we had a plethora of fabric, yarn, and craft stores. I found it weird when I moved here and there were so few. I thought, what, are people in the big city too busy to craft?

StN: What are you working on right now?

BJP: My Jean jacket was just stolen, so I'm going to have to decorate a new one, which means dying a blue one black, because it's hard to find black ones, and put studs and patches on it. And probably silk-screen an image on the back. How lame is that? I'm such a phony. Zoë, why did you say I sewed?

StN: Where'd your jacket get stolen?

BJP: This terrible club called the Dance Cave. It's like being in a beer commercial surrounded by horny aggro jocks. If you somehow ever end up there, do not let your belongings leave your sight.

StN: Who would you want to paint your portrait?

ZD: Anne Grigich. She works in mixed media.

BJP: Nick Blinko. Now his work actually sells for a lot of money as an outsider artist because he has "schizo affective disorder" and was institutionalized. Apparently he can't create when he's on the medication he's supposed to take, so he just doesn't take it. He risks total dementia for his art. I plan to get one of his drawings tattooed when I have the money.

StN: It would be fun to be drawn by a revered cult figure.

BJP: For sure!

Jeff Shoop of Ester Drang

StN: Jeff, what's the best homemade gift you've ever gotten?

JS: A welded steel cage in the back of a van for our band's gear. We had been in a wreck and lost our trailer and a good amount of gear, so in the new van we wanted something to protect the gear [from] theft. I spent the day with a family friend welding this great cage in the back of the van. I also got a wonderful felt leaf lapel pin, but it got sold out from under my nose at the merch table.

StN: What skill, art, or craft would you like to learn?

JS: I'd like to cobble my own shoes. StN: Who would you want to paint your portrait?

JS: Jamie Hunt. StN: Recommend some records to knit by.

StN: Harold Budd and Brian Eno, *The Plateaux of Mirror*. Damien Jurado, *Where Shall You Take Me*.

LIZ ENTHUSIASM OF FREEZEPOP

StN: Tell me about your crafting life.

LE: I make stuff out of other stuff. It usually involves going to the thrift store and finding something cool or pretty or weird or ugly, and then eventually it gets turned into something that's even more cool or pretty or weird or ugly.

StN: What's your favorite place to buy materials in Boston?

LE: Urban Renewals in Allston is my favorite thrift store. You never know what you're going to find there.

StN: What skill, art, or craft do you want to learn?

LE: Something hardcore like glass-blowing or metal-smithing. I also really miss printmaking, which I haven't done since college.

StN: How did one of your songs end up on a Playstation 2 game?

LE: It's actually four songs now! One of my bandmates works in the field, and knew the right people to pester about it.

StN: What's the best homemade gift you've ever gotten?

LE: Freezepop lip balm. This fan got in touch with us and custom-made a whole batch for us. They're really super, especially for dealing with the Boston winter.

StN: Tell me about learning to knit.

LE: Well, the thing with knitting—I thought it would be a good thing to do while we were on tour and I was stuck in the car. But, it turns out, I'm always too busy either navigating or feeling car sick, so it didn't work out like I planned.

StN: Who would you want to paint your portrait?

LE: Egon Schiele.

SURAN SONG IN STAG

StN: Do you knit or crochet?
Suran: Yes! My mother taught me to crochet in grade school. I'd make long blankets for my older sister who was away at college. Her care packages were a mix of brownies, popcorn, and crocheted.

StN: What's the best homemade gift you've ever received?

Fool! Support! My dad makes the best. He's Korean, but was raised in China, Japan, and Boston. So he mixes all these

influences. We'll have borscht with dumplings, or spaghetti with peanut sauce mixed into the tomato sauce, or kimchee with meatloaf.

StN: Do you make your own costumes?

Yes. The first costumes involved stiles and really, really long white skirts to catch slide projections of Gorgon's heads, Italian heraldic paintings, and Supergirl. The top was a red cape and a Superman shirt. Tell me about the band's

portable stage and the self-contained power-generator. Its elements conveniently unfold from the hull of the stage itself. We set it up in parking lots, at summer festivals, and guerrilla sites. The best sites are in cooperation with nonprofits and community block parties. Our dream is to dump the generator and use solar panels someday. Is the band's commitment to self-sustenance a political thing?

StN: Definitely. [We're] especially interested in how to combat the negative forces of the marketplace, from market censorship to human rights abuses to the big business takeover of our democracy. Making stuff not only makes us feel great, but it also fights against cultural homogenization and labor cruelty. Recommend some music to stick by.

StN: Moon, the Glowfriends, Prom King, and the Trolleyvox.

Sufjan Stevens

SftN: As a male knitter, do you get any special attention?
SS: Some women really go for it. One time I was scolded on the subway for not knitting European style. I've since learned.
SftN: Are you knitting anything right now?
SS: I'm just starting an athletic sweater with a zipper.
SftN: Big needles or small?
SS: I have all kinds. It depends on what I'm making. Generally, I prefer size seven or eight.
SftN: Tell me about the knitting group you were part of in New York.
SS: Well, that was when I was working two corporate jobs, and felt the need to be around real people making real things with their hands. It was at Vision Center for the Blind. They have all kinds of classes and programs for the visually impaired. There's even a bowling class. It's awesome. Let me tell you, if you're ever feeling down, go hang out with some blind folks. They're the brightest people in the world.
SftN: Who taught you how to knit?
SS: I started very young, in kindergarten, at the Detroit Waldorf School. My teacher, Mrs. Williams, taught me. It's part of the curriculum early on. You even make your own knitting needles.



SftN: Where's your favorite place to buy yarn?
SS: Romni Wools, in Toronto. It's a madhouse. They've got everything.
SftN: Recommend some records to knit by.

"I was scolded on the subway for not knitting European style."

SftN: Do you usually give your finished stuff away?
SS: I rarely keep what I make. Knitting makes great gifts. The only thing I had trouble giving away was this gnome I made last Christmas. It was like a friend to me.

SS: At my Sunday knitting circle we listen to Willie Nelson's *Spirit* and Dolly Parton's *Greatest Hits*.
SftN: Do you knit on tour?
SS: Always.

Sherry Fraser of Two Ton Boa

SftN: What's your favorite place to buy yarn in Olympia?
SF: Canvas Works. It's downtown on the same street as Kill Rock Stars.
SftN: What are you knitting right now?
SF: My third pair of fingerless gloves. I'm rusty because I took a break for a year, being so busy with music. But all year long I've been wearing the black angora wool fingerless gloves I knit while writing the first Two Ton Boa full-length.
SftN: Big needles or small?
SF: I love working with small wood needles.
SftN: Who taught you how to knit?
SF: The co-owner of a local yarn shop taught me how to cast on, and from there I taught myself by reading knitting books. I learned to knit because I wanted a pair of soft fingerless gloves to keep my hands warm while writing music in my basement, and I wanted to work toward learning how to knit some 1930s sweater patterns.
SftN: What skill, art, or craft do you want to learn?
SF: I'd like to learn to make really great late '30s dresses. I've got patterns and know how to do a bit of altering, but I'd really like to take some specialized vintage sewing lessons when I've got free time. The hardest part of that would be finding suitable fabric for those kinds of projects—fabrics these days don't come anywhere near the quality of that era.
SftN: Explain the Home Arts renaissance.
SF: Young people are oversaturated with disposable, pre-made everything. Making things from scratch is new and novel... It's satisfying and comforting to work on homemade stuff. It's a creative act you can put so much love into.
SftN: Please recommend some records to knit by.
SF: The unabridged narrated audiotapes of *Lord of the Rings*.

Jean Cook of Beauty Pill and Ida

SftN: You recently played violin in New Orleans at a show with one of Slave to the Needles' favorite knitters, Jenny Toomey. How did you two meet? Are you going to collaborate on any more projects?

JC: Jenny and I met in a recording studio in Virginia, maybe six or seven years ago. I was brought in to do some strings on the musical she wrote with Franklin Bruno. A year later she brought me to Nashville, where we spent some time on *Antidote*. Then we went on a little tour in 2001. I've been playing with her ever since. I've recently started working for [Toomey's nonprofit organization] the Future of Music Coalition, so we've been seeing more and more of each other. Pretty soon we'll move in with each other and start wearing each other's clothes. A musical? Do you mean *Tempting*?

J: No, it was actually a few years before *Tempting*. The musical still hasn't been released, as far as I know. The songs I remember from it are fun-like, a guy comes to the office party and brings grenades for everyone to drink, instead of beer. Everyone is mean to him except one woman from his office who thinks he's kind of sweet and they have a little fling.

SftN: Tell me about your work with Air Traffic Control.
J: Air Traffic Control is a handful of strong and super-smart ladies who helped musicians get involved in electoral politics last year. We

worked with about two hundred musicians and thirty independent record labels, and documented over 3,000 progressive music-focused events in 2004.

SftN: Have you tried knitting or crocheting?
J: I used to finger-crochet when I was younger.
SftN: What did you make?
J: Bracelets and rings, mostly.
SftN: What's your favorite song on *Heart Like a River* right now?
J: Well, I've been thinking about "Lake Blues" recently. Ida's been rehearsing this week to get ready for a short U.S. tour. We played "Lake Blues," like, sixteen times.

SftN: What's it like to perform with the Hip-Hop Philharmonic?
J: I have such terrible rhythm. That's the dark secret of classical trained violinists—we can only identify straightforward beats. Ask me to play bossa nova or soul-influenced hip-hop, ah, well, you'll be listening to me practice for a long time.

SftN: Who, dead or alive, would you want to paint your portrait?
J: You know, every once in a while I talk to Jon Langford about doing a painting for me—not a portrait, but maybe something else. I've talked to Ryan Nelson about making a drawing of me to use for Beauty Pill stuff.

SftN: Please recommend some records to knit by.
J: Danko Jones, *We Sweat Blood*. Andrew Bird, *Fingerlings*. Toby Twining, *Chrysalid Requiem*.

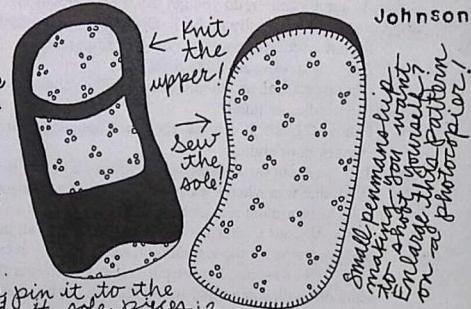
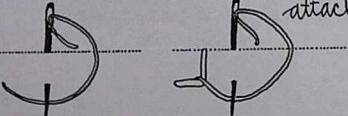
Baby JAMES to knit and sew

To knit the upper, CO 19 sts on size three needles. This end is the heel edge; working in garter stitch throughout, inc 1 st at beginning of next row & every alternate row. You're always increasing at the toe edge. When there are 23 sts, BO 13 sts starting at the heel. 10 sts rem. Work these 10 sts for 12 rows, then CO 13 sts. Knit 1 row. Decrease 1 st at the beginning of next row & every alternate row, at the toe edge, until 19 sts rem. Bind off.

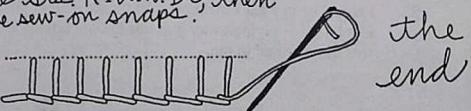
To make the sole, draw a vaguely bean-shaped sole on paper, allowing 1/2 an inch at the edge where you'll hem the pieces. You can enlarge the cartoon to the right if you're nervous about free-handing it! Cut out your paper sole cloth & cut around the pattern. You'll need one piece for each slipper. If your fabric has a one-sided pattern, remember to reverse the paper pattern for the last two pieces. Next, pin together the pieces in pairs, inside out. Stitch around the perimeter of each set, leaving an inch-long gap so that you can turn each set right-side-out. Sew up each gap to assemble the sole to the upper, matching thread to sole to an upper, with wrong side of upper facing out. I recommend a blanket stitch. Be sure to maintain the fullness of the toe as you sew. To give the James their characteristic strap, CO 11 sts, pick up 12 sts along back edge of heel, & CO 11 more sts. K1 row BO, then attach the sew-on snaps.

Materials: size 3 needles, small amounts of fabric & sport-weight cotton yarn, matching thread, sewing needle, scissors, straight pins, and two sew-on snaps. By Aimee Johnson

*Blanket
stitch:



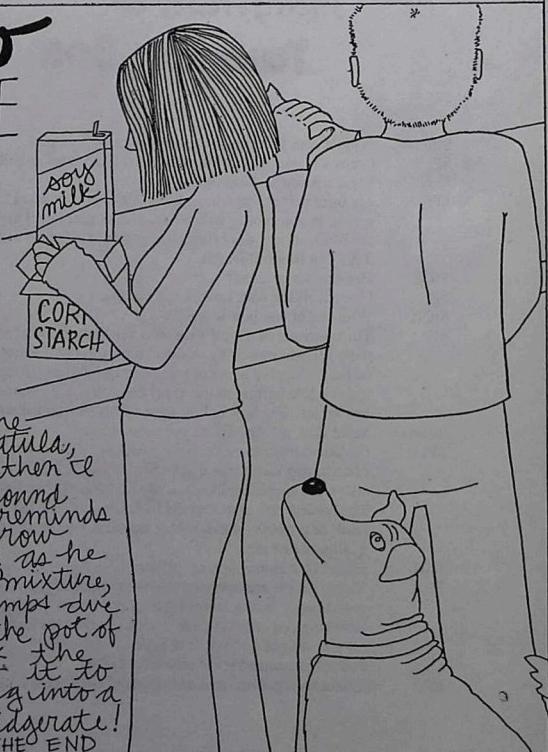
Small permanent
marking
for
making
your
own
pattern
to
make
sure
it's
symmetric
on
the
photo
piece.



It Takes Two to make VEGAN CHOCOLATE PUDDING

Ingredients: 3 TBSP cornstarch, 1/2 cup soy milk, about 25 vegan chocolate chips, 1/2 cup sugar, & 1 1/2 cups additional soy milk.

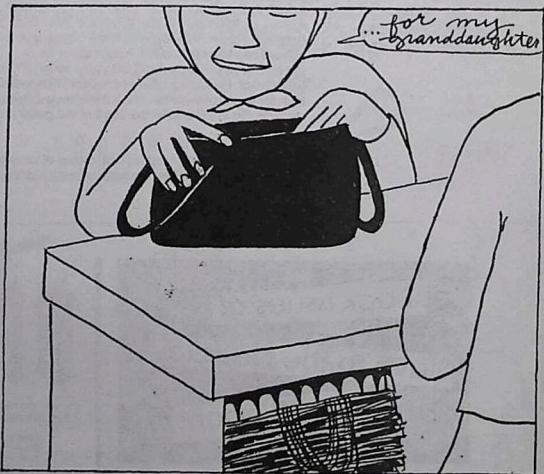
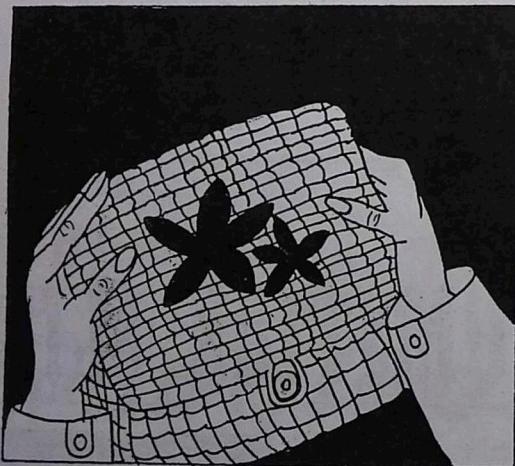
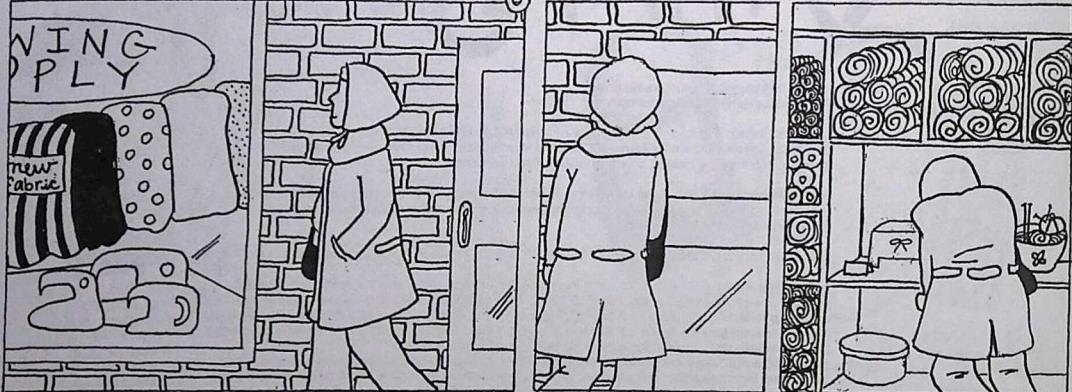
At our house, making chocolate pudding takes two. My patient husband dissolves the cornstarch in 1/2 c. soy milk (his task demands diligence, & a spoon) while I melt the chocolate over low heat. Using a spatula, I stir the sugar into the chocolate, then I add the remaining 1/2 c. soy milk. Around this time, Ben comes over & gently reminds me to keep stirring. (I usually grow weary of it & begin to daydream, as he knows.) We pour the cornstarch mixture, which is commendably free of lumps due to Ben's dedicated stirring, into the pot of chocolate. Simultaneously, I whisk the concoction vigorously, then bring it to a boil. Then we pour the pudding into a big bowl (or lots of small ones) & refrigerate!

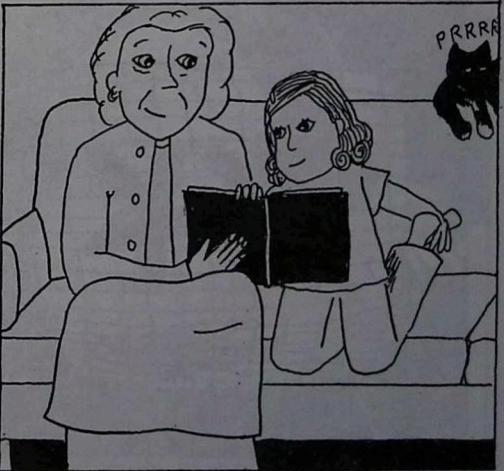


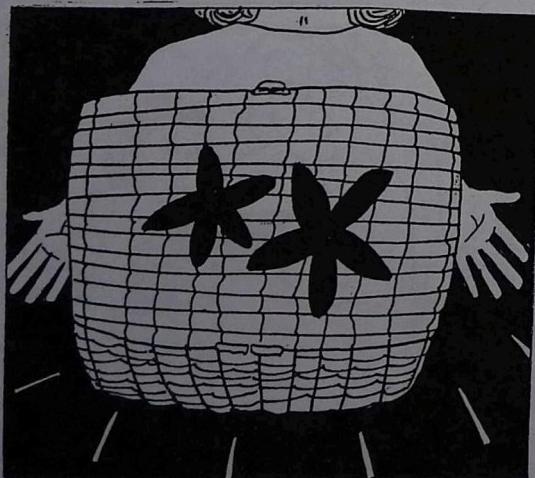
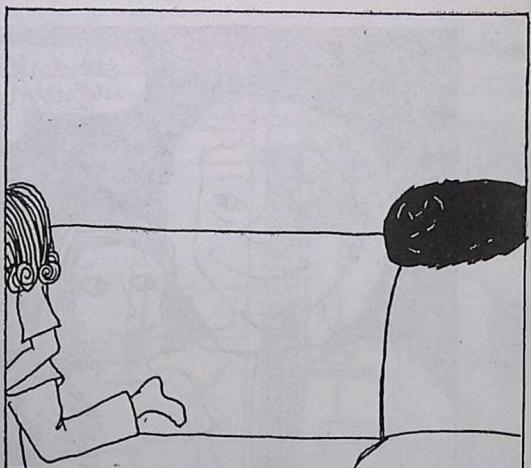
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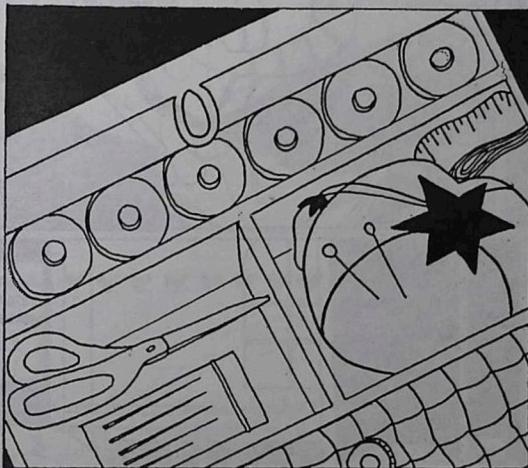
The Sewing Box

by Aimee Hagerty Johnson





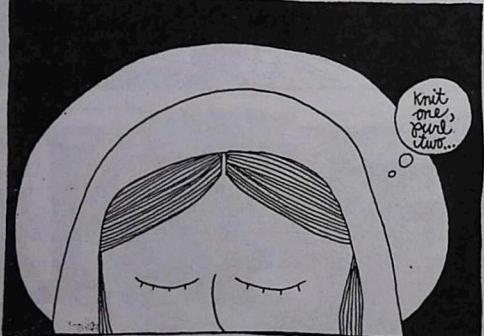




Knitting Madonnas

by
Ainlee
Johnson

In fourteenth-century Europe, paintings portraying the Holy Family began to include images of domestic life, reflecting artists' curiosity about the human elements of the life of Christ. In some depictions, Mary is knitting.





Source: Rutt, Richard. *A History of Hand Knitting*. Loveland, CO: Interweave, 2003.

Smitten Mitten

Pattern
by Ann
Gallentine

clue by
dimee
Hagerty
Johnson

Ann Gallentine's double-cuffed mitten allows lovers to hold hands outside in cold weather! CO 28 sts and divide on 3 dpns with 12 sts on needle #1, 8 sts on #2, and 8 sts on #3. Join and *K2, P2, rep from * for 3 inches. K1 round. BO 7 sts. K to end of round. Cut yarn & put these 21 sts on holder. Repeat all steps to make a second cuff, but do not cut yarn. Join cuffs by slipping the 21 sts from holder to needle #1. Bound-off sts of both cuffs should be side by side. There are 26 sts on needle #1 & 8 sts on each of the other 2 needles. K1 round. Place 14 sts on each needle. NR: inc. 1 st on each needle. Now you have 45 sts. Work in st. st. for 5 1/2 inches. Decrease: Row 1: *K3, K2 tog, rep from *. Rows 2 & 3: K. Row 4: *K2, K2 tog, rep from *. Rows 5 & 6: K. Row 7: *K1, K2 tog, rep from *. Row 8: K. Row 9: K2 tog, rep from *. Draw yarn through remaining 9 sts. Sew the seams and weave in the ends.

cute alert! Materials: 1 1/2 ounces Red Heart yarn
cute alert! —————— 4 #10 double-pointed needles
cute alert! a big stitch holder

The
end

Sew your own nursing t-shirt

Pattern by Beth Cortelyou
Illus. by Aimee Johnson

This pattern for a simple-to-sew breastfeeding shirt makes it very easy for moms to nurse their babies discreetly. The design is infinitely changeable, the result is adorable, and making it is inexpensive. The finished shirt has a vertical center slit beneath a square patch, and the nursing opening is accessible from both sides.

Nursing opening

1. Start with any old t-shirt! Actually, any knit shirt without pockets or front details will work, including dresses.
2. Put on the shirt & mark an X where the largest part of your bust line falls. This will be the center of the slit (see diagram 1). The size of the slit depends on the size of your chest, but 7 (S) to 9 (XL) inches will probably work. If you are XL-busted, you might want it even longer. I made one extra-large shirt with a bigger opening (about 12"), but it isn't as discreet.
3. With the bust line mark in the center, mark the length of the opening down the middle of the shirt. Cut the opening in a straight line (see diagram 2).
4. Finish the edges of the opening. If you have a serger, this is best. If not, fold the edges down and zig-zag around the opening.

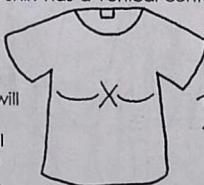
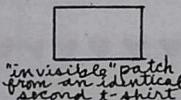


diagram one

Patch

1. Cut an 11-inch square for S and M sizes, or a 13-inch square for L & XL. (Of course, you could also use a rectangle or change the size to your liking.)
2. Fold & iron the edges down 1/4 inch twice, enclosing the raw edges like a hem.

imagine the PATCH possibilities!



Putting it together!

1. Iron any wrinkles out of your t-shirt. Lay the t-shirt down flat and place the patch over the slit, centering it on the shirt. (I usually place the top of the patch a couple inches under the neckline.) Just make sure that the patch covers the entire slit, with at least 1/2 an inch overlap on both ends.
2. Carefully pin the patch to the shirt. Starting under the neckline, pin the entire top part of the patch. Knits are stretchy fabrics, so make sure you have it pinned securely, or it will stretch while you sew it!
3. After you pin the top, hold it up & make sure it's placed where you want it.
4. Pin the bottom the same way.
5. You don't have to pin the sides of the patch. When the top & bottom are pinned on, decide how far you want to sew the sides. I sew about 2 inches on each corner. You can sew more if you are smaller-chested, or less if you are larger. Measure, then pin that amount on each side.
6. Now you're ready to sew! Make sure that you never catch the back of the shirt while sewing... you only want to sew the overlay onto the front. Start on the side and sew around the top to the other side, then down to the spot you marked. Sew right on top of the seam you made when you finished the edges of the patch (this is called "stitch-in-the-ditch"). This way no one can tell that the patch isn't sewn on all the way around.



Finished!

LEARN ABOUT
how read it is to
BREASTFEED
at www.lalecheleague.org

To nurse, simply pull the opening to the side. The patch provides all the coverage you need! Some women find that they prefer to lift the patch from the bottom, rather than pull to the sides. If you want to do this, just sew a button or snap to each of the bottom corners instead of sewing the entire bottom.

All This is Mine #10

In service of the DIY revolution, Sugene's arts and crafts manifesto helps you create advent calendars, zippered pouches, mobiles, popsicles, handmade paper, herbal bath treats, and bagels. Her zines are affectionately customized and copies are at a premium, so e-mail Sugene first to find out what she's got for you: atmzine@aol.com. Recommended.

Applicant

Something about photos recovered from the trash triggers the almond-shaped part of the brain that recognizes poignancy. Perverting the format of a high school yearbook, the creator of *Applicant* combines decades-old photographs of Ph.D. candidates with excerpts from their confidential letters of reference. This one-timer has everything I want in a zine: pathos, laughs, and the potential for a lawsuit. \$3 from Microcosm Publishing: www.microcosmpublishing.com.

Arts and Crafts Revolution

Light-weight directions for turning jeans into a skirt, making cheap iron-ons, dying your hair, making lip balm, and cutting your own bangs. Some pieces are just cut out of other magazines, which I suppose is one way to make a zine (a crappy one). Terri admits that her "zine of ideas" is sorely lacking in instructional value. Agreed! \$1-2. Terri, 2906 W. Broadway, Ste. 219, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, V6K 2GB.

As Soon as You're Born They Make You Feel Small

This collection of writing on youth liberation, originally published in the mid-80s, features pieces about the roles of authority and resistance in childhood. Contact Wendy Ayotte, c/o Children's Legal Center, 20 Compton Terrace, London N1, England.

The Assassin and the Whiner

Carrie McNinch's high-profile comic zine is well-loved for lots of reasons, including the brutality of McNinch's candor about her alcoholism and ruined relationships. She also publishes the archetypal foodzine *Food Geek*, which is my favorite of her projects. \$1 each. POB 49403, Los Angeles, CA 90049, USA.

Best Zine Ever! #4

Compiled in the zine capital of the world (Portland, OR), this generous zine-review zine contains zero disses—only compliments! Be sure to have plenty of dollar bills and postage stamps on hand when you read about these reviewers' favorite zines of the year, because you're going to be sending so many dollar bills through the mail that your will husband wonder where his coffee money went. Start by sending a couple bucks to Tugboat Press, POB 12409, Portland, OR 97212, USA. Recommended.

Biff #3

Allie and Bill Donahue are a daughter-father team whose style the independent arts community has recently observed in the Trachtenberg Family Slideshow Players. My favorite pieces in *Biff* are those in which Allie and her dad interview local personages. "The Hat Lady Speaks," an interview with the glamorous owner of Kilpatrick's Hats, is my favorite; straightforward and tender, an interviewer of any age could be proud of it.

Contact biffmagazine@hotmail.com. Recommended.

Broken Hipster

Kidney failure and dialysis aren't usually the stuff that zines are made on, but Emiko, a twenty-something in Portland, writes about these things and the ways in which they have altered her formerly hip life. *Broken Hipster* brings something new and special and valuable to the zine scene: perspective. Will Emiko's work inspire a bumper crop of mini-comix by scenesters with chronic illnesses? \$1. 2520 SE 43rd Ave. #B, Portland, OR 97206, USA. Recommended.



From Emiko Badillo's *Broken Hipster*

Catholic School Funnies

You don't have to be a recovering Catholic to relish MJ's cute, creative comix. Also get your hands on her *All True Sometime!* (not to be confused with Barry Scanlan's equally great *True Story!* zine). CSF is \$1; ATS! is \$2. POB 948, Athens, GA 30603, USA. Recommended.

Chord Easy

Perfectly bizarre and impenetrable directions for playing the guitar. Em Turner also publishes guides to eating sensibly and dwelling portably, which I can only assume are similarly dense, weird, and enthusiastic. 40-page version is \$3; 12-page version is \$1. Light Living Library, POB 190-cc, Philomath, OR 97370, USA.

Comixville #4

Terrific and inexpensive zine-review zine about DIY comix. 50 cents and a stamp. POB 697, Portland, OR 97370, USA.

Couch Tag

The first comic and the last are particularly intense, drawn in an ink-block style whose plainness lends itself to the poignant rendering of both facts and dreams. \$1.50. Jesse Reklaw, POB 11493, Berkeley, CA 94712, USA.

Dream Whip #13

Too hearty for a staple, the lion's share of this



From *All True Sometime!* by MJ Hammes, creator of *Catholic School Funnies*

quarter-sized perzine consists of the author's handwritten stories. But its series of "True Tales from Food Not Bombs!" comic strips are really the heart of *Dream Whip*. \$4. POB 53832, Lubbock, TX 79453, USA.

East Village Inky

The semiannual mamazine gets funnier and funnier. Ben and I nearly peed ourselves reading aloud from the most recent issue, in which Ayun recounts the day she was told (by a veterinarian!) that she herself would have to cut off her cat's foot in order to extract him from the radiator. The zine is usually about Ayun's life in NYC with her hubbin and kids, and it's always hilarious. 4-issue subscription is \$12 (worth it) at <http://www.ayunhalliday.com/inky/>.

Eat Your Heart Out, Martha!

Like Kim Campbell's *Homezine*, this mamazine argues for home schooling, unschooling, and new approaches to socialization. I keep meaning to write to Candyce to thank her for providing me with ways to talk with well-intentioned family and friends (also, nosy-ass strangers) who challenge the home schooling of my future beesbees. *ETHOMI* is the value of the year at 60 cents per issue. POB 3124, Fort Smith, AR 72913, USA. Recommended.

Fantasy News #116

Harry Wasserman writes an old-skool sci-fi and fantasy zine with a fascinatingly out-of-date format: six sheets of white 8½ by 11" copy paper stapled in the upper left corner like your ninth-grade *Billy Budd* paper. Issue #116, which was probably mimeographed in Wasserman's garage (and I mean that as a compliment), spends time on *Evil Dead II*, the latest Batman movie, Lugosi in *The Ape Man*, that Superman show on the CW, and munmun movies of the 1930s and -40s on DVD. Composed on a typewriter, everything about this zine is old-fangled, including the unearthly passion expressed by its creator. \$3. 7611 N. Regent Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53217, USA. Recommended.

The Democrat

Just when I'm about to high-tail it out of sleepy-ass Madison leaving no forwarding address, something totally fucking cool happens here. Recently it was an invitation to honorary membership in the Mad-Lovin' Mamas, a gang of local parent-types who craft, make zines, swap clothing, and generally whoop it up in Mad-town. Before that, it was the appearance of Hillary Schwab's *Democrat*. Her political compilation appeared right before the 2004 presidential "election" and urged feminists of the far left to reconsider the view that a vote for the Dems is a

vote for the oppressive two-party system. *The Democrat's* list of contributing authors is impressive, and includes Madison's beloved lesbian Congresswoman, Tammy Baldwin. Send a couple bucks to POB 1483, Madison, WI 53701, USA. Recommended.

The Free Press Death Ship

I love reading Violet Jones' grievances about the ISBN system, the decline of individual autonomy, and the monopoly of corporate media. The thoughtful and radical zine is produced with a 1960s *Variety* (no computers) for the look all the young pamphleteers are going for. Send a donation—cash only—to POB 55336, Hayward, CA 94545, USA. Recommended.

Hausfrau

Highlights of this riotous mamazine of the highest quality include: "A Slice of Bread with Maple Syrup on It, and Other Heart-Healthy Recipes in Under a Minute," how it came to pass that Nicole's daughter gave herself a bath in the sink, "No, YOU Shut Up: One Father's Journey into Non-Violent Conflict Resolution," a flower show exposé, and "My Activist Family was Pepper-Sprayed by the Police," and interviews with hauspasas. This is the daddy issue. \$4. POB 10383, Portland, ME 04104, USA. Recommended.

Here It Is #1

Nice comics from the inaugural issue center on the topics of babysitting and obsessive-compulsive tendencies. Erin, be my pen pal! POB 3382, Bloomington, IL 47402, USA.

Homezine #2

To new readers, zines are equivocal, their lack of heft puzzling: is it a book? a pamphlet? do I take it home and keep it forever, or just leave it at the bus stop? Perhaps it's because zines are so characteristically makeshift, stapled, and unavailable in hardback, but after lending (and losing) several early issues of *The East Village Ink* to a rattled mom of twins last year, I became fainthearted and ungenerous in my zine lending. I long to share Kim Campbell's premium *Homezine* with everyone in town, but this homeschool-focused mamazine will have to be pried from my cold, dead hands. Alternatively, order it for \$2. 6917 W. Shakespeare, Chicago, IL 60707, USA. Recommended.

I Hate This Part of Texas #4

This zine is popular because John Gerken tells good stories. *IHTPOT* costs \$1 + stamps. POB 72581, New Orleans, LA 70172, USA.



From *The Origami Pei* by Dan Moynihan

An Intro to Book Binding

To make a sketchbook, you need paper, a sewing needle, thread, an ice pick, and Kyle Bravo's zine. Ironically, my copy arrived bound incorrectly. No hard feelings, guy! Contact kylebravo@juno.com.

Invincible Summer

Enjoy the embarrassed, vaguely irritated feeling of re-reading your old high school diaries? Then you'll be goofy over *Invincible Summer*. The drama, the hyperactive analysis of stupid conversations and bad relationships, the obsessed-with-yourself journaling, documentation of your fling with veganism—it's all here, complemented by ink drawings that are simultaneously cute and grotesque. An anthology of Nicole Georges' zines is available from Tugboat Press for \$11. POB 12409, Portland, OR 97212, USA, or for individual issues e-mail nicole@nicolegeorges.com.

The Heart Star

The creator of *28 Pages Lovingly Bound with Twine* wrote this sweet and spooky folktale about a ghost searching for stillness in the land of Gohio. Hey, my parents live there! \$2. POB 106, Danville, OH 43014, USA.

Jane

In 1970s Chicago, a group of women united to come to the aid of other women when the state failed to do so. Jane, the clandestine abortion service, didn't bother demanding that the government legalize abortion (in fact, its members deny that Jane had anything to do with *Roe v. Wade*); instead, the group took possession of the knowledge they needed to provide a safe abortion service and support system. But Jane was no half-arsed, back-alley operation—it was well-organized, frontline work. I read this history from cover to cover and back again. Its interviews with Jane members detailing the day-to-day operations (and the less usual events like getting busted by the same cops whose nieces and daughters used the service) are especially powerful. Reading about the work of these women will give you courage—which you're going to need during what's left of the reign of the Bush Crime Family, mark my words. Read this zine, then start volunteering for NARAL. \$3. POB 50217, Baltimore, MD 21211, USA. Recommended.

King-Cat Comics and Stories #63

John Porcelino's comix are terribly Zen. Here you'll find gentleness, poetry, wisdom, and love. Perfect. \$2.50. POB 170535, San Francisco, CA 94117, USA. Recommended.

Long Live Mutiny: Pirate Tactics

Intriguing handbook for the activist group that fucks shit up and doesn't get caught. Available for \$1.50 at www.microcosmpublishing.com. Recommended.

Lovely Ugly Cruel World #8

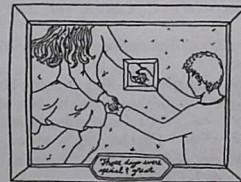
In telling the human story, the mini-comix format ranks just above the novels of V.C. Andrews and slightly below a Kevin James movie in popular credibility. The creator of *LUCW* seems interested in improving that ranking, but for Christ's sake start with issue #1 because I have no fucking idea what's going on here. \$1. *Lunar-Circuitry*, POB 45714, KC, MO 64171, USA.

Malady

Cute comix in exactly the feminized, cartoony style you prefer. \$1 + stamps. *Malady*, c/o IPRC, 917 SW Oak St. #218, Portland, OR 97205, USA. Recommended.

The Midwest Compilation Project

Clevelanders! Citizens of Detroit, Iowa City, and Minneapolis! Your oft-maligned portion of the United States is more than just silos and megachurches, according to the editors of this compilation of photos, poetry, and prose about the flyover country. \$3. 2705 Great Forest Dr., West Bend, WI 53090, USA.



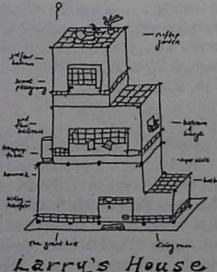
From *Twice Told Tale* by Jessixa Goodlax

Mildred Lee, Space Station Schoolgirl

Vacationing on Blackjack Planet, Mildred Lee meets gambling addicts at a robot casino and swims in the hotel pool. This comic's beautiful color cover has some of the retro aesthetic of *Scooter Girl*, but Mildred is far less glamorous. Pricey at \$4. www.substitutelife.com.

Modern Robot Illustrated

If you're not sick to death of robots, you might enjoy leafing through this catalog of fantastical 'bots and their fictitious functions. E-mail Dug Belan at liketodrawpictures@hotmail.com.



Larry's House

From *Secret Mystery Love Shoes* by Maria Goodman and Andree Robinson

My Heart Beats Only for You... and a Few Dozen Other People

Detailing every crush in the life of Portland's unsinkable Nickey Robo, this perzine is packed with juicy details about the author's infatuations with girls, boys, and TV stars. Fun to read! POB 11688, Portland, OR 97211, USA.

The Origami Pet

Five beautiful comix about pets made from Japanese folding paper. Muy, muy adorable. Available from www.mreow.com, or e-mail dan@mreow.com. Recommended.

Reglar Wiglar #14

This issue of the hilarious, long-running rock'n'roll zine features a rocker advice column, Rad Lips, one-word record reviews, and really funny spam poetry. All the standards, too: comix, book/zine/music reviews, interviews with rock stars, and flimsy-ass newsprint. \$2. 1658 N. Milwaukee #545, Chicago, IL 60647, USA. Recommended.

Secret Mystery Love Shoes

Long deterred by its jabberwocky title, I finally read a copy of Maria and Androo's quarter-sized *SMLS*. C'est délicieux! C'est charmant! There are irresistible cartoons and a bunch of anecdotes that make it clear that the co-authors are in love with each other. My favorite piece: a description of the mansion Maria and Androo built for their pet rat, Larry. My issue took forever to arrive (like, three months) but I can't stay mad at these two. \$2 or trade. 2000 NE 42 Ave. #303, Portland, OR 97213, USA. Recommended.

Slug and Lettuce

There are more than eighty issues of Christine's legendary DIY/punk zine, which she's been publishing for nearly twenty years. Rock! Focusing on radical parenting, vegan action, ecopunk news, and reviews of zines and records, *Slug and Lettuce* is one-stop shopping for all your vegan punk zine needs, and all in seriously reduced print. You may need your bifocals, that's how punk it is. \$1. POB 26632, Richmond, VA 23261, USA. Recommended.

Tight Pants

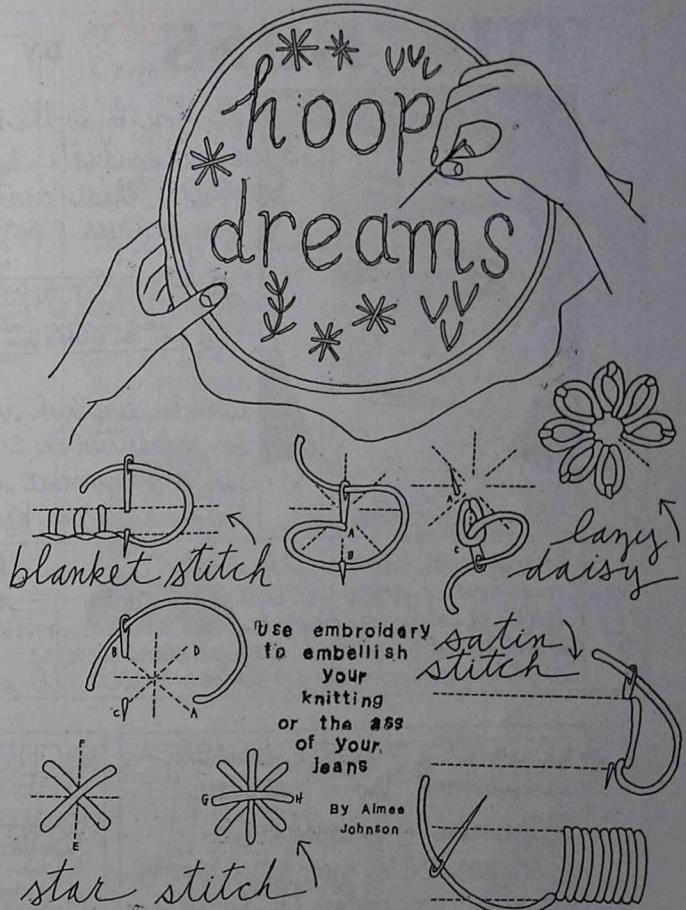
In the course of a lifetime devoted to punk rock, Madeleine has quit lots of jobs, eaten plenty of sugary cereal, and rocked out at countless MTX shows. She's partial to a life of gaiety, and I can respect that. Reading *Tight Pants* over the early cup of coffee, I realized that it is physically impossible for me to put down an issue of Madeleine's zine until I've consumed every witty, self-critical story from start to fin. \$2. POB 100882, Milwaukee, WI 53210, USA. Recommended.

True Story!

Chock-a-block with brilliant comix and sweet stories to make you cry and laugh, *TS!* is truly exceptional. Its creator, Barry Scanlan, won a posh award from *Utna* magazine last year, 'cause he got talent! \$3. 120th Ave., Milaca, MN 56353, USA. Recommended.

TV Plotz #15

Being married to a darling man whose favorite childhood TV show was *3-2-1 Contact*, I have to look elsewhere if I want to sit around reminiscing (and I do) about the TV sitcoms and family dramas of the 1970s and -80s. Ben is thoughtful, loving, modest, smart, honorable, patient, talented, great in bed, and a very good cook—but



From Carrie McNinch's *The Assassin and the Whiner*

the man doesn't know a damn thing about *Little House on the Prairie*, the extended first-season cast of *The Facts of Life*, or the multiple spin-offs of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. To fill that void in my life, I look to zines like Barbara Rushkoff's *Plotz #15*, which is all, all, all about television! \$3. POB 819, Stuyvesant Station, New York, NY 10009. Recommended.

Twice Told Tale

I wish I'd drawn this cheerless, mysterious romance story, but I didn't. Order it from Jessixa

Grilis for \$2. POB 45506, Seattle, WA 98125, USA. Recommended.

What the Ladies have to Say

This zine is important. Ronni and Ronica interviewed human rights activists in the Middle East and Asia who work to eliminate sex trafficking in the Philippines, experimentation on Palestinian prisoners in Israel, and many other shameful and terrifying violations of human rights. The interviews are compiled here. \$3. POB 28833, Seattle, WA 98118, USA.

THE BOSS

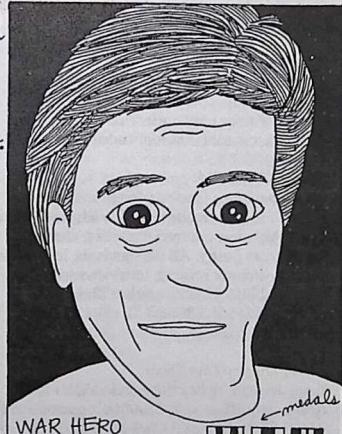
By Aimee Johnson



As you know, the Bush crime syndicate has ruled this country for lo these five years.

Bush's excuse for the Iraq war were deliberate to extend the American empire to the middle east, its key to controlling oil and the global economy.

When the liar Bush ran for re-election in 2004, his main opponent was the democrat John Kerry.

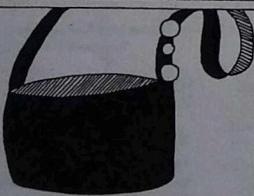


The week before the election, a John Kerry rally in my town drew 80,000 citizens -- the largest gathering of people in this midwestern city for anything, ever! Like Americans all over this awesome country, those 80,000 citizens wanted change.

I went to the rally with my boss from Planned Parenthood. Because I'm young, poor, & an excellent typist, she likes to do me a good turn when she can. As such, she had given me a special ticket and advised me on RALLY ETIQUETTE:

DON'T BE FUNNY WHEN THE COP PATS YOU DOWN.

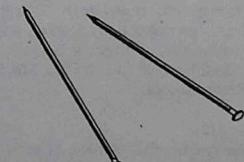
Confiscated any bombs today? -haha...



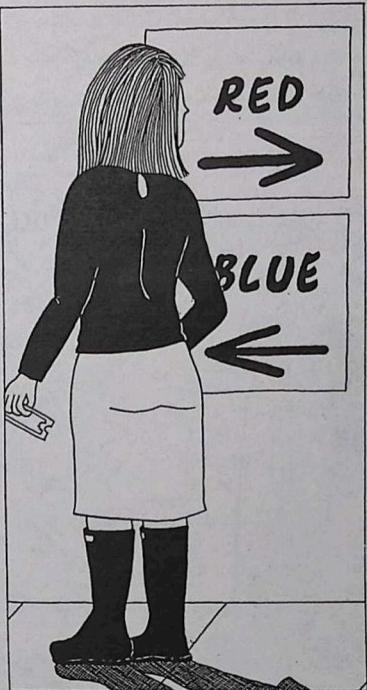
NO BAGS!



NO UMBRELLAS!



NO KNITTING NEEDLES!



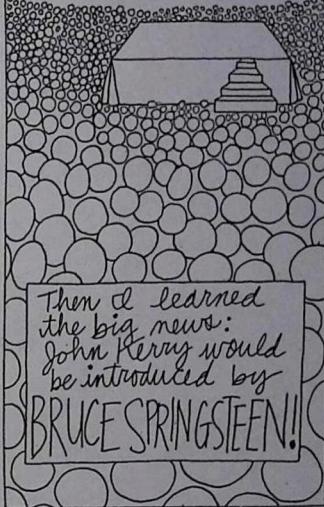
at the rally,
it came to pass
that my boss
was in possession
of a ticket for
the RED SECTION.*

my ticket gained
me, and other
members of the
proletariat
access to the
less desirable
blue section.



*no relation to
the red states.

I could hardly see
the stage, but I
didn't mind. The
future president of
the United States
would be on stage in
less than an hour.



Then I learned
the big news:
John Kerry would
be introduced by
BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN!!

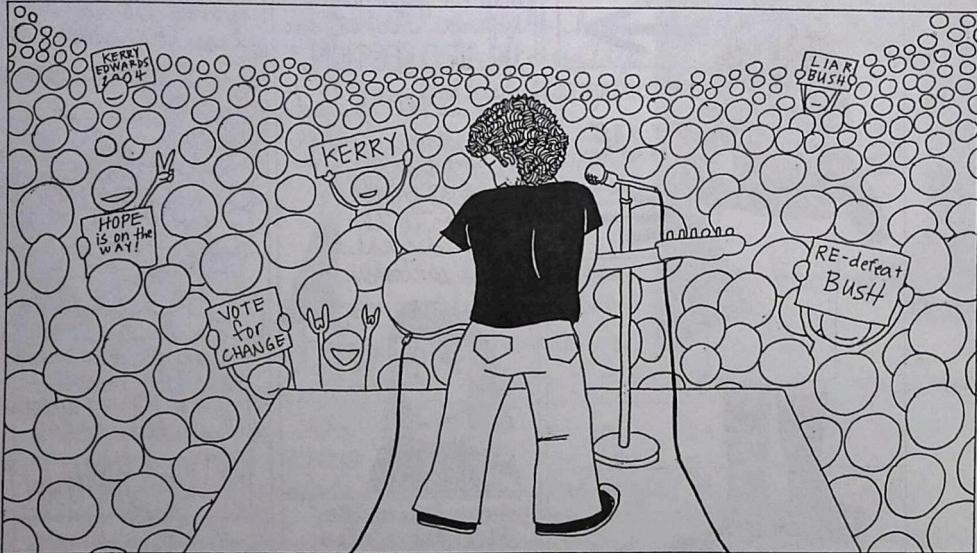
My high school acquaintance Nina, that snooty cutie from AP English, had confided an unlikely crush on Bruce Springsteen, and I had agreed that he was seriously sexy. At that time it was far more acceptable to favor Kurt Cobain or one of the assholes from the high school football team, so we kept this exchange between us.

CLASS of 199



Nina and Aimee
(Prom)

At the rally, two hours passed. Just when I was wondering whether I would ever sit down again in this world, Bruce Springsteen appeared onstage.



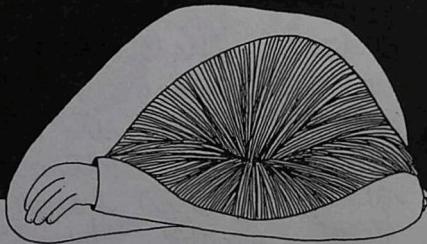
Before playing any music, he delivered a surprisingly moving political sermon. You couldn't have dragged that man from the stage with a rope!

The country we carry in our hearts is waiting for us.



The citizens loved every moment.

A week later, Bush had "won" re-election and resumed the conversion of this nation into a radical fundamentalist Christian state.



That's not the country I carry in my heart.

end



Made in U.S.A.

Slave to the Needles

